

Tragedy, Temporal Sterility, and No Futurity in Faulkner and Camus

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INTRODUCTION

*Oui, je suis présent. Et ce qui me frappe à ce moment que je ne peux aller plus loin.*¹
Albert Camus, “Le Vent à Djémila”

The literary relationship of William Faulkner and Albert Camus, though a bit recherché, is one of intrigue and geographic transcendence. Their relationship, however, was certainly an odd one, that is, if we can even call it a relationship. We might, in fact, call their connection a story of unrequited love—of unrequited literary love. Or perhaps “unrequited” is a bit too strong. Indeed, their fondness was mutual though slightly unbalanced: Camus publicly praised the American², yet Faulkner never publicly made any statements regarding Camus until after his death in 1960. Over the years, few have recognized and noted their correspondence, probably since their communication was often indirect and brief. They only met once, though one could easily mistake them as lifelong acquaintances. Their knowledge of each other’s literary lives and works was uncanny, especially in light of the fact that their direct communication was extremely sparse. They not only knew about one another but also understood each other’s works and endeavors, given that they both seemed to live in worlds that equally disgusted and confused them—worlds which simultaneously rejected them and shoved them into isolation.

I initially noticed their literary ties when I came across Albert Camus’s theatrical adaptation³ of William Faulkner’s *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), the sequel to the controversial novel *Sanctuary* (1931). At first, I was stunned, for never before would I have imagined that these two men, separated by an ocean and thousands of miles, possessed an explicit link, a

¹ “Yes, I am present. And what strikes me in this moment is that I can go no further.” Henceforth, all translations in this study are my own unless otherwise noted or cited from a popular source.

² In September 20, 1956, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* published an interview with Camus before the premiere of *Requiem pour une Nonne*, calling Faulkner “le plus grand écrivain contemporain” (the greatest contemporary writer) (Cézan 10).

³ *Requiem pour une Nonne*, first presented on September 20, 1956.

literary bridge that traversed and transcended their geographic and cultural divisions. Little did I know as I started my comparative research that eventually I would stumble upon one of the richest and most unique literary relationships of the twentieth century. And as my research progressed and their literary connections continued to surface, I became perplexed by how little scholarly research has hitherto considered this comparative topic. Of course, everyone knows of the famous Faulkner-Hemingway and Camus-Sartre relationships (or rivalries), but to many a Faulkner-Camus relationship might seem rather forced, affected, or specious. Superficially, we immediately note only two commonalities: (1) both Faulkner and Camus won the Nobel Prize in Literature⁴ and (2) as I already mentioned, Camus theatrically adapted Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*. But, obviously, Nobel laureateship does not warrant any immediate comparison, and both authors' *Requiem*s only tender a comparison insofar as juxtaposing the original with the adaptation. Furthermore, this relationship becomes even more peculiar as we consider both authors' milieux. Faulkner was a white Mississippian; Camus, a pied noir with a mother of Spanish descent. Faulkner was a dropout at the University of Mississippi; Camus earned his *diplôme d'études supérieures* (roughly equivalent to a Master of Philosophy) from the University of Algiers. The descendant of a military ancestry, Faulkner desperately tried to join the United States Army and the British Royal Air Force; as quondam communist-turned-socialist and tireless pacifist, Camus believed that the French, pieds noirs, and Arab natives in Algeria could live together peacefully, without colonial oppression or violent revolution. Still, in spite of all these immediate disconnections and disparities, this study will broadly focus on how we might unlatch the limited understanding of the Faulkner-Camus relationship by exploring how and where their correspondence and literary congruity resounds across and between their oeuvres.

⁴ Interestingly enough, Camus was, in fact, a Nobel candidate during the same 1949 selection cycle that Faulkner eventually won ("Nomination Database: Literature").

In short, this study endeavors to expand yet condense the Faulknerian-Camusian relationship according to two principal subjects: time and tragedy. Later in this introduction, I will adumbrate why and how we can initially connect both Faulkner's and Camus's canons according to these vague topics. First, however, I would like to delineate the general arguments and trajectory of this study. Broadly, this study contends that both Faulkner and Camus present time and the experience of time as a human tragedy relative to the motif of sterility that pervades both their canons. Thus, this study intends several objectives: (1) to establish how time, according to both Faulkner and Camus, is tragic; (2) to examine how sterility is relevant to time; (3) to delineate how and where sterility presents itself in both authors' works; (4) to demonstrate the temporal implications and ramifications of sterility as depicted by both authors; and (5) to elucidate how Faulkner and Camus exhibit the temporality of sterility as gravid with tragedy. I then organize this study into three chapters that accentuate different "types" of sterility or topics wherein sterility becomes crucial. The first chapter will examine the temporal implications of infanticide and the Child according to the nuclear family, reproduction and genealogy, futurism and the future of humanity. This chapter will consider infanticide in Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* and Camus's *Le Malentendu* (1944) as symbolic of the destruction of the nuclear family as well as the political and philosophical ramifications of infanticide broached in Camus's *Les Justes* (1951). Building on the issues of the Child, reproduction, and the family, the second chapter will consider the differences between feminine and masculine modalities of time and the friction between these modalities that arises within the topics of masculine supremacy and hetero-(masculine)-normativity; castration, emasculation, and impotence; sexism, misogyny, and gynocide. This chapter examines the feminine temporalities of Temple Drake from Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and Janine from Camus's "La Femme Adultère" (1957) and how both women's

experience of time changes as they suffer the abuses of an overbearing, castration-fearing masculine order. Nevertheless, this chapter will also explore the castrated/emasculated/demasculinized temporalities of Quentin and Jason Compson in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). Finally, the third chapter will then focus on the presence of a queer temporality as distinct from and opposed to the heteronormative temporal modalities within the conventions and issues surrounding procreation, childrearing, and the nuclear family. This chapter will then reconsider Quentin Compson as a queer character and his experience of time as indicative of a queer temporal modality as I analyze his "perverted"⁵ love of death and the *metonymic displacement of desire* that defines his concealed passion for his roommate, Shreve⁶. I will then end this chapter and my study with an examination of Camus's Caligula as a queer character with a distinctly queer time relative to the issues of repressed sexual desires, the pressures of heteronormative sexual and social conventions, performativity, and the death drive. Ultimately, I argue that the effects of Faulkner's and Camus's representations of time via sterility induce an irresolvable confusion of and within time that eventually paralyzes these characters in a hopeless present, devoid of futurity, trapped within a perpetual yet irredeemable past.

In one of the first essays comparing Faulkner and Camus, John Philip Couch⁷ points out that the Faulkner-Camus comparison reveals much by way of understanding *modern* tragedy, for both of their literary careers can be defined by the desire to "communicate the qualities of tragic seriousness," the hunt for the best language to convey and manifest tragedy (122). Couch's

⁵ Faulkner's word choice in the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* (208).

⁶ As I reconsider Quentin's experience of time as queer, I must note that this reconsideration is not directly connected with my analysis of Quentin's time as castrated, nor should we attempt to draw any connections between the two analyses. When I first analyze Quentin's time, I am solely considering his character as heterosexual/normative. When I return to Quentin in the final chapter, I attempt to reanalyze him as a queer character, looking at examples that distinctly indicate his potential queerness and how his queerness affects his temporal reality. As such, though one might be compelled to make this connection, the castration of a heterosexual masculine Quentin's time is not commensurate with the queer temporality of a queer Quentin.

⁷ "Camus and Faulkner: The Search for the Language of Modern Tragedy" (1960)

essay is unique owing to the fact that it scrupulously compares both authors' *Requiems* according to their tragic potency, though he ultimately decries both works as failures (125). Nevertheless, while loosely using "modern" in his article's title and throughout his essay, Couch never definitively reveals what makes the modern tragedy "modern" relative to the history of tragedy. While his study analyzes the modernity of the *Requiems*, his conclusion seems indecisively based on whether Camus's play is a good adaptation, not whether it is a good tragedy, though his article would have us believe that the play is equally a failed tragedy because it is a failed adaptation. The obvious disconnect between adaptation and tragedy notwithstanding, I must question according to what historical "definition" of tragedy is Couch evaluating both *Requiems* since to denote these works as *modern* tragedies would seem to indicate diachronic differences within the politics of the tragedy. More importantly, what is the modern tragedy? In reviewing Faulkner's *Requiem* in the program to his adaptation, Camus writes a brief *prière d'insérer*, or blurb, concerning Faulkner and tragedy and equally reveals his own thoughts about the modern tragedy:

Le *Requiem* est ainsi, selon moi, une des rares tragédies modernes. . . . D'abord parce qu'un secret y est progressivement révélé et que l'attente tragique y est constamment entretenue. Ensuite parce que le conflit qui oppose les personnages à leur destin, autour du meurtre d'un enfant, est un conflit qui ne peut se résoudre sinon dans l'acceptation de ce destin lui-même. Faulkner contribue ici à faire avancer le temps où la tragédie à l'œuvre dans notre histoire pourra s'installer aussi sur nos scènes. Ses personnages sont aujourd'hui et ils sont affrontés pourtant au même destin qui écrasait Électre ou Oreste. Seul un grand artiste pouvait tenter ainsi d'introduire dans nos appartements le grand langage de la douleur et de l'humiliation. . . . Ajoutons pour finir que le grand problème de la tragédie moderne est un problème de langage. Des personnages en veston ne peuvent parler comme Œdipe ou Titus. Leur langage doit être en même temps assez simple pour être le nôtre et assez grand pour atteindre au tragique. Faulkner a trouvé, selon moi, ce langage. Mon effort a été de le restituer en français et de ne pas trahir l'œuvre et l'auteur que j'admirais.⁸ (*Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles* 1865-6)

⁸ "*Requiem* is thus, in my opinion, one of the rare modern tragedies . . . First, because it gradually reveals a secret and constantly maintains the expectation of tragedy. Second, because the conflict that confronts the characters with their destiny, centered on the murder of an infant, is a conflict that cannot be resolved except through the acceptance of this destiny. Here, Faulkner furthers the time when the tragedy at work in our history can also take its place on

Not only does Camus laud Faulkner's artistic abilities but he also helps us define the modern tragedy, particularly the language of the modern tragedy, which must be quotidian yet equally forceful and eloquent. For Couch, Camus's ultimate failure is his language; the racial tension found within the various Southern dialects of Faulkner's *Requiem* is lost in translation (125). Though the Southern-American dialects are certainly lost within the general fluency of Camus's French, the racial tension remains relevant, for the enmity between Nancy and Temple, servant and master, is still vividly forceful. And, as Philippe Forest discusses throughout his book⁹, the tragedy in both *Requiem*s is maintained by the infanticide and the fact that we will never truly understand why Nancy murders Temple's child. Additionally, paying some attention to the aggregate of the Camusian theatre, E. Freeman notes that the modern tragedy of Camus's dramaturgy arises from the tension between human action and moral limits and the justification of exceeding these limits¹⁰. In Camus's works, one such limit that is often crossed is the killing of children; hence, infanticide becomes an archetype of the Camusian tragedy. Still, as I read Couch's and Forest's studies, I wonder if the tragedian commonalities between Faulkner and Camus extend outside the pages of *Requiem*. If Couch is just in noting that both authors were comparably "searching" for the language of modern tragedy, might we surmise that this search was not fixed definitively within the years they were writing their respective *Requiem*s?

I ask this question because, ultimately, this study endeavors to enlarge the Faulkner-Camus comparison. I also state this question rhetorically, for, as my research progressed, I

our stage. His characters are up-to-date, yet they still brave the same destiny that crushed Electra and Orestes. Only a great artist could attempt to introduce the grand language of pain and humiliation into our homes. . . . To finish, let me add that the great problem of modern tragedy is a problem of language. Characters in business suits cannot speak like Oedipus or Titus. At the same time their language must be simple enough to be ours and elaborate enough to reach tragic. I believe Faulkner found this language. My effort was to reconstruct it in French while betraying neither the work nor the author that I admire."

⁹ *Le Roman Infanticide: Dostoïevski, Faulkner, Camus* (2010)

¹⁰ "Camus's *Les Justes*: Modern Tragedy or Old-Fashioned Melodrama?" (1970)

eventually realized that Faulkner and Camus appeared to have been extensively familiar with each other's works, which suggests the promise of a mutual influence. Along with their mutually canonical familiarity, the miniscule amount of writings that we have from both writers concerning the other, in fact, demonstrates more than familiarity but understanding and empathy, as if they had closely known each other for years. We know that Camus deeply admired Faulkner. We also know that throughout his literary career, Camus noted having read many of Faulkner's novels, such as *Sartoris* (1929), *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* (1930), and *Light in August* (1932) as well as asserting his fondness for and the influences of *Sanctuary*, *Pylon* (1935), and *A Fable* (1954) (Prioult 7; Guérin 319). Yet, Faulkner's familiarity and admiration are more difficult to pinpoint. Faulkner never enthused over Camus's works nor did he explicitly list those works he may have read. We do know that following Camus's 1957 Nobel Prize acceptance, Faulkner sent him a congratulatory telegram reading, "On salue l'âme qui constamment se cherche et s'interroge"¹¹ ("L'âme qui s'interroge" 537-8). In *Faulkner, Mississippi* (1996), Édouard Glissant recounts a visit to Rowan Oak, Faulkner's home in Oxford, Mississippi, and, while exploring Faulkner's study and library, Glissant chronicles having examined an inscription written "in a book by Albert Camus" (Glissant 15). But what did this inscription say? And in what book was this inscription found? Glissant, unfortunately, does not reveal anything else about this singular moment, but his recollection does reveal that Faulkner owned and read at least one of Camus's books. Again, in Faulkner's encomium of Camus, he writes, "[Camus] disait: 'Je n'aime pas croire que la mort ouvre sur une autre vie. Pour moi,

¹¹ "I praise the soul that constantly searches for reason and questions its own existence." Faulkner made this quote public in the eulogistic article "L'âme qui s'interroge" for *Nouvelle Revue Française*'s March 1960 publication in memoriam Camus. Faulkner's English translation of the same article was published a year later in the *Transatlantic Review*'s Spring 1961 issue ("Albert Camus" 113-4).

c'est une porte qui se ferme""¹² (L'âme qui s'interroge" 537). Though quoted incorrectly,¹³ Faulkner is referencing a passage from Camus's essay "Le Vent à Djémila," originally published in the collection of essays titled *Noces* (1938). And as we read the rest of Faulkner's article, we recognize his general knowledgeability of Camusian absurdism, which evinces that he might also have been familiar with the essays *L'Envers et l'Endroit* (1937), *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942), and *L'Homme Révolté* (1951). Finally, perhaps one of the most personal, intriguing, and mysterious quotes between these two men is a very brief comment Faulkner writes about himself and Camus: "We share the same anguish" (qtd. in Glissant 64). What anguish was Faulkner talking about? What exactly did Faulkner see in Camus that he also saw in himself? Though Faulkner provides no explanation, we recognize that his comment is less a suggestion of similarity and more a declaration of spiritual understanding and homage to Camus as both a writer-philosopher with a canon imbued with woe and self-sacrifice and as a human who felt exiled within his own motherland and struggled to find meaning and clarity within the Absurd.

With the personal connections between these two writers beaming in many fascinating and mysterious directions, hopefully we can see why the limited quantity of research topics and critical sources that compare Faulkner and Camus is a shocking misfortune. Like Couch and Forest, most research heretofore almost exclusively compares Faulkner and Camus according to *Requiem*¹⁴. The most extensive analysis of both authors seems to be Christaine Prioult's book, *William Faulkner et Albert Camus: Une Rencontre, une Communauté Spirituelle*¹⁵ (2007). Prioult's book is noteworthy as it seeks a canonical comparison according to a myriad of topics,

¹² "[Camus] said: 'I do not like to believe that death opens onto another life. For me, it is a door that closes itself.'"

¹³ The real quote reads, "Il ne me plaît de croire que la mort ouvre sur une autre vie. Elle est pour moi une porte fermée" ("It does not please me to think that death opens onto another life. It is, for me, a closed door") ("Le Vent à Djémila" 27).

¹⁴ Blair, John G., "Camus's Faulkner: *Requiem for a Nun*" (1969); Izard, Barbara, *Requiem for a Nun: On Stage and Off* (1970); Wilson, Paule A., "Faulkner and Camus: *Requiem for a Nun*" (1979); Collington, Tara, "'Une des rares tragédies modernes': L'Adaptation camusienne de *Requiem pour une Nonne* de Faulkner" (2007)

¹⁵ *William Faulkner and Albert Camus: An Encounter, a Spiritual Commonwealth*

including: (1) the influences of Dostoevsky, (2) Faulkner's and Camus's commonalities with Hemingway and Melville, (3) Faulkner's influence on *L'Étranger*, (4) a comparison of *Requiem for a Nun* and *La Chute* (1956), and (5) the stylistic similarities to Faulkner found in Camus's *La Peste* (1947) and *L'Exil et le Royaume* (1957). While Prioult's book is impressive, overall, her exegesis concentrates more on Camus's works and his obvious Faulknerian inspiration rather than exploring how their mutual anguish and empathy lead them both to comparably pursue, illustrate, and analyze specific literary and humanitarian themes within their oeuvres. Nevertheless, Prioult's study does focus one chapter on a more proportionate yet less obvious commonality within the Faulknerian and Camusian canons: the issue of time. For the most part, Prioult's chapter represents a compilation of the past eighty years worth of research concerning temporality in both author's canons; though, she still accredits Faulkner with inspiring and influencing the temporal structures of Camus's fictions and, therefore, focuses slightly more on Faulknerian metaphysics. Still, Prioult's work is noteworthy for initiating this comparative discourse on temporality.

Influenced by the studies of Couch, Forest, and Prioult and in light of the relationship between Faulkner and Camus, I reach one of my preliminary questions: How might time and tragedy operate conjointly within Faulkner's and Camus's canons, especially since both topics pervade their fictions? Though this study does not seek to exhaustively explore this question, I do wish to pinpoint a specific commonality that appears canonically prevalent and connective. As I mentioned earlier, this commonality is the motif of sterility. However, this question presupposes that Faulkner and Camus present time in a similar manner or, at least, that both writers have a comparable conception of time. Indeed, in a general sense, we might initially proclaim that both Faulkner and Camus recognized time as a misfortune and a nuisance. The

misfortune and nuisance of time seems to spawn from its incomprehensibility, absurdity, and disorder. Of course, for both Faulkner and Camus, the clock or calendar do not resolve the incomprehensibility and absurdity of time, nor does any other device meant to systemize temporality. Instead, these devices and systems only render time more absurd. Rather, Faulkner's and Camus's works are concerned with the experience of time apart from the devices that attempt to keep our metaphysical realities in check. In the works of Faulkner and Camus, if the tragedy, misfortune, or absurdity of time generate from our experience of time, then how do we experience time?

Essentially, we will never definitively answer this question, for everyone experiences time in a unique manner. Still, among all the potentially infinite understandings and experiences of time, most temporal modalities can likely be reduced to the "simple" difference between how we experience time according to what is ephemeral and what is perpetual. (I say "simple" since, linguistically, this difference between the ephemeral and the perpetual is fairly dichotomous without being too elusive). If we are to propose the existence of an experiential time, then there must equally be a time that is not experienced, a time that is natural and, therefore, indifferent to human existence—of course, if humanity did not exist or if we did not possess the sensory and cerebral faculties to discern the existence of time, then this natural time would hardly seem to matter at all. Nonetheless, according to natural time, everything would technically be ephemeral, and only time itself would be perpetual. However, according to experiential time, the distinction between the ephemeral and the perpetual becomes less dichotomous. But what classifies the ephemeral and the perpetual according to experiential time? According to its etymological meaning, "ephemeral" comes from the Greek *ephēmeros*, meaning "lasting only a day" ("ephemeral, adj."). The ephemeral then represents our understanding of what *was* or *is*

temporary; thus, the ephemeral or ephemera represent the past or those objects, persons, and ideas that *will eventually* belong to the past. Yet, the ephemera that are wholly ephemeral and metaphysically past still leave behind psychological and phenomenological traces in our present, allowing for “the past” to seem perceptibly “present.” According to experiential time, the perpetual becomes a bit more complicated, for an object’s or entity’s “existence” as perpetual is entirely precarious. Etymologically, “perpetual” has several unique but varying denotations. First, the obvious denotation would be “that which lasts forever” and “continuous and unbroken.” However, historically, the term has been used to mean “held or occupied until death” or “that which lasts a lifetime” (“perpetual, adj.”). These latter two definitions suggest that an object’s or entity’s status as “perpetual” only matters according to one’s understanding and experience of such object or entity as lasting for a lifetime. So, while something might technically be ephemeral according to natural time, that same object or entity is equally perpetual relative to experiential time. As such, we begin to see the confusion that comprises the precarious ephemeral-perpetual dichotomy. This dialectic is further complicated when the individual mind or a collective consciousness is confronted with the reality of death—this confusion and tragedy thereby becoming paramount to our understanding of Faulknerian and Camusian temporality.

Nonetheless, how do Faulkner and Camus depict this confusion between ephemerality and perpetuity, and, more importantly, how is this confusion relative to sterility? Initially, I note several key quotes from the Faulknerian and Camusian oeuvres that highlight the obscurity within the ephemeral-perpetual dichotomy. In Faulkner, I recognize the recurrent reference to a famous line from Macbeth’s soliloquy near the end of Shakespeare’s tragedy: “Tomorrow and

tomorrow and tomorrow.”¹⁶ Though this quote would have us believe that the real tragedy is “tomorrow,” the future pains of existence, we can equally deduce that this quote is synonymous with “yesterday and yesterday and yesterday,” the notion that the pains of the past remain ever-present, day after day. For this reason, this quote becomes analogous with another famous Faulknerian quote from *Requiem for a Nun*: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past” (80).

Both cases present a phenomenological comprehension yet confusion of what distinguishes the ephemeral from the perpetual, and vice versa. However, as Jean-Paul Sartre notes in an essay¹⁷ on *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulknerian metaphysics is without a future, a temporality of the past and the ephemeral, for the past negates what the future *is* or *could be* (*La Nouvelle Revue Française* 52.1 1057-61). In Camus, I note several comparable quotes. First, in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, like Faulkner’s future-negation, Camus writes about “la création sans lendemain” or “ephemeral creation” or, translated more literally, “creation without tomorrow” (151). While this quote does not necessarily import the perpetual encumbrance of the past, it does illuminate a negation of futurity. In 1937, Camus also writes in his *Carnets* of a problem between destiny and the past: “Futilité de problème de l’immortalité. Ce qui nous intéresse, c’est notre destinée, oui. Mais, non pas ‘après,’ ‘avant’”¹⁸ (*Carnets: mai 1935-février 1942* 51). As Camus writes, our concern is with destiny and the future but not with a future that is wholly separate from the present or, especially, from the past. Instead, when we think of the future and its potentiality, we often project the past onto the future and judge the future according to the past, our minds continually stuck of the *before*—this notion will later constitute our understanding of a “phantasmatic future.”

¹⁶ In *Requiem for a Nun*, Temple Drake repeats this quote multiple times in the novel’s latter half. In *Pylon*, Faulkner titles his fourth chapter “Tomorrow” and his fifth chapter “And Tomorrow,” a shortened allusion to the same Shakespearean quote.

¹⁷ “A propos de *Le Bruit et la Fureur*: La Temporalité chez Faulkner” (1939)

¹⁸ “Futility of the problem of immortality. What interests us is our destiny, yes. But not ‘after,’ ‘before.’”

The connection between the aforementioned comprehension of time and sterility becomes more transparent when we read Camus's claim in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* that the human mind and life are without a future and, therefore, sterile:

Je ne veux parler pour l'instant que d'un monde où les pensées comme les vies sont privées d'avenir. . . . La seule pensée qui ne soit mensongère est donc une pensée stérile. Dans le monde absurde, la valeur d'une notion ou d'une vie se mesure à son infécondité¹⁹ (98).

If we consider Camus's understanding of time as *sans avenir* or *privé d'avenir*²⁰ (without future or deprived of future), then we can begin to draw a connection between sterility and temporality—if thoughts and lives are both without a future and sterile, then to be sterile would appear syllogistically to mean to be without a future. According to the ephemeral-perpetual dyad and experiential time, if sterility represents the privation of futurity, then sterility would equally import the “ephemeralization” of the perpetual and, as such, would render the individual or collective consciousness aware of its own mortality. But, is sterility's relationship with temporality merely metaphysical and, therefore, not applicable in those more pragmatic realms of everyday existence? Within the Faulkner and Camusian canons what “types” of sterility do we find, where do we find these sterilities, and how does sterility consequently affect time?

Within their works, sterility is pervasive and equally multivalent, relevant in a variety of issues such as sexuality, impotence, castration, procreation, incest, rape, misogyny, gynocide, and infanticide. Surely, the connection between time and sterility is peculiar and counterintuitive. In what follows, I will deviate from this study's preliminary, metaphysical discussions to a humanistic and pragmatic sense of time that is affected by various cultural, social, and historical issues within the Faulknerian and Camusian fictions. Before moving on to

¹⁹ “For the moment, I want only to speak of a world where thoughts, like lives, are deprived of future. . . . The only thought that is not fallacious is therefore the sterile thought. In the world of the absurd, the value of an idea or of a life is measured by its infertility.”

²⁰ Camus uses these two terms throughout *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*.

the primary discussion of how Faulkner and Camus present sterility as a tragic temporal modality within the larger fields of age, gender, and sexuality, I will begin by deconstructing the denotations and connotations of sterility to establish a few key definitions, helping to clarify the various angles and contexts through which sterility will be applied.

In common speech and language, “sterile” and “sterility” are terms not often associated with time or used to explain or understand temporality. Sterility is often considered a biological term relevant to copulation or reproduction—or to the inability to copulate or reproduce. And indeed, etymologically, sterile comes from the Latin *sterilis* and Sanskrit *starī*, both meaning “barren cow” (“sterile, adj.”). The newer definitions of sterile date to the nineteenth century and show its integration into a hygienics discourse from which we get the verbal derivatives of sterilize and sterilization. Thus, in our modern understanding, we separate sterile into two general categories: first, a biological and sexual term similar to infertile, barren, and unfruitful; and second, a term suggesting cleanliness, disinfection, and purity. However, we also see a eugenics discourse around the same time as the hygienics one that combines these two general categories. Now, sterile, sterility, and sterilize have a combined biological, sexual, and hygienic definition meaning to render someone incapable of producing offspring, usually for reasons deemed, at the time, socially undesirable, such as physical handicaps, intellectual disabilities, mental illnesses, gender and sexual aberrations as well as for reasons of racial and ethnic domination and homogeneity²¹. Still, despite all the various denotations and connotations that we could deduce and ascribe to sterility, the one unifying factor across all its definitions is, in fact, an implication of time, and more specifically, an implication that time is limited or has been limited or bracketed (for instance, by death), and that *the* or *a* future does or will not exist.

²¹ One of the first uses of sterile within a eugenics discourse, in *British Health Review*’s February 1910 issue R. R. Rentoul said, “In 1903 I publicly advocated the sterilisation of the insane” (“sterilize, v.”).

In the biological, sexual sense, sterility evokes notions of time and futurity from its antitheses, such as fertility, procreation, posterity, and genealogy. Hence, in this case, time obviously carries a generational signification (both chronological and genealogical), and the perpetual is associated with the idea that copulation and reproduction are a means of preserving and propagating the human race, to insure and secure future generations. To be sterile (via infertility, impotence, castration, et cetera) would consequently denote the inability to produce a genealogical future, or posterity. In the hygienic and certainly in the eugenic senses, sterility and sterilize represent a desire for cleanliness, sameness, and social homogeneity via the domination or annihilation of the “unclean.” In the essay “Le Témoin de la Liberté,” Camus notes this connection between sterility, death, and domination and writes, “Vouloir dominer quelqu’un . . . c’est souhaiter la stérilité, le silence ou la mort de ce quelqu’un”²² (*Essais* 401). Hence, sterility and sterilization have also become synonymous with death and destruction, to dominate and to cleanse a population of the abject, the “undesirable,” thereby eliminating congenital, intellectual, psychological, and cultural differences (or “dirtiness”). In a conceptual sense, the hygienic and eugenic meanings of sterile also invoke an air of doom: to sterilize is to induce a quality of definitive lifelessness, pointlessness, and futility. Hence, to sterilize someone suggests to make procreation impossible but also to cleanse and decontaminate one’s identity, destroy one’s reason for being and the sense that an individual or communal future exist. We find the latter form of sterility (which I call the sterilization of identity) within the numerous types of discriminations, such as racism and genocide, misogyny and gynocide, et cetera. This final definition largely encompasses the other definitions because it usually informs, and has historically motivated, sexual sterilization and the desire for cultural homogeneity. Still, what remains constant is the

²² “To want to dominate someone . . . it is to wish for sterility, the silence or death of this someone.”

notion that time has been sterilized, the future, the hope for change and newness becomes increasingly bleak.

As mentioned, the different definitions and interpretations of sterility largely inform each other and often occur simultaneously within a single topic or even a single event. Thus, I approach the problem of how to effectively discuss this term within Faulkner's and Camus's canons without driving my argument in circles. To maintain clarity and a logical trajectory, I have divided sterility according to different "types" of sterilization: of life, of sex(uality), and of identity. Several examples will inevitably overlap into the other categories, but mostly I will use those examples transitionally. Beginning with the sterilization of life, we will focus on a Camusian view of life as sterile and death as sterilizing and how this attitude equally resonates in the Faulknerian canon. Primarily, this section will consider how the topics of the Child and infanticide factor into a larger understanding of time and futurity according to reproduction, genealogy, and posterity. Moving on to the sterilization of sex(uality), we will return briefly to the biological and reproductive topics of sterility as they relate to larger issues surrounding gender and sexuality. However, in the absurd, fictive worlds of Faulkner and Camus, successful procreation or the desire to propagate are practically nonexistent. Still, sex and sexuality do not always assume propagation; rather, the reproductive nature of time and futurity would only be pertinent to normative heterosexuality due to the biological nature of our species. For this reason, the sterilization of sexuality will also focus on the differences between the feminine and masculine senses of time as distinct from procreation as well as on the non-normative temporal modalities and how time and sexuality cooperate within the realm of the queer. Finally, this study will discuss the sterilization of identity within the framework of the sterilization of sexuality since, more often than not, the sterilization of sexuality becomes an issue of identity, or

of losing one's identity. Nevertheless, the sterilization of identity constitutes, perhaps, the largest form of sterilization in the Camusian and Faulknerian canons, so an exhaustive exploration of this category in all its diversity would be next to impossible. Accordingly, I have limited this discussion to those issues of "abjected" bodies and identities (the non-normative, racial minorities, and the intellectually disabled) that simultaneously carry connotations of sexual sterilization.

CHAPTER 1

THE STERILIZATION OF LIFE

The sterilization of life (of “life-time”) is mostly synonymous with death or murder depending on the context. But, the events that comprise the death or murder are predominantly less important than what the act of dying suggests²³. In a secular sense, death, as Camus believed, is sterile, unequivocally specifying the end, the destruction of time and the future, and the nonexistence of an afterlife. In addition, although Faulkner was a religious man and student of the Bible, his works possess a similar type of sterilizing death as those in the fictions of Camus. Still, in many religious discourses, death is demarcated as liminal instead of sterile, representing a static moment of an indeterminate amount of time between life and afterlife. Since the latter is purely theoretical and essentially without concrete textual support, this chapter will focus only on those examples that present life as sterile and death as sterilizing.

While death is pervasive in the Faulknerian and Camusian canons—as it is in almost every author’s canon—more precisely though, Faulkner and Camus seem to emphasize certain deaths more than others. These deaths typically include the death of the young and innocent, or infanticide²⁴. The deaths of women and gynocide appear equally in both canons; nonetheless, these terms also presuppose various issues that will be more important while discussing the sterilization of sex and identity. In the most literal and obvious sense, the ending of a life marks not only the end of a time but also the true ephemeralization of something that was theoretically

²³ I say this only because this study focuses on the issue of temporality relative to death and not the medical or criminological issues surrounding a death or murder. This is not to say that a natural death is equal to a murder, but in both cases they represent the sterilization of life.

²⁴ Hereafter, I will mark both the death and murder of the child as infanticide. While the fictional murdering of the child would normally be classified as infanticide, I will also mark the general and natural deaths of children within the noted fictions as infanticide, for these events also mark a theoretical and narratological murder committed by Faulkner and Camus.

perpetual until that moment of death. Especially if we might understand life and time in terms of a perpetual present, death flags the termination of that perpetuity.

Furthermore, instead of using “death,” I will often write the “end of life-time.” Life-time, though, should not be confused with or mistaken for lifetime. Lifetime is largely a lateral term—that is, a bracketing term concerned with the ends of a lifespan—that presupposes either a prospective presumption of death’s imminence or a retrospective contemplation of the fact that one’s life had a beginning and end. Thus, lifetime conceptually exudes an air of doom, for it excludes any individual sense and experience of time and does not ontologically present a struggle between ephemerality and perpetuity, only denoting the existence of the ephemeral. Nevertheless, life-time is a medial and durational term, concerned with neither the origins nor the ends, which I will use to include the phenomenology of time. While still possessing the general meaning of the “time of life,” life-time refers to the interior workings of temporality within the individual life and how the individual consciousness experiences or understands the life’s time. Like Temple Drake cries repeatedly in *Requiem for a Nun*, “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow” is one understanding of life-time that indicates that the time and trials of life seem never-ending. Yet, when the individual consciousness of *life-time* is confronted with the reality of *lifetime*, or death, we then see the collision of the ephemeral and the perpetual engendered by life-time. For example, imagining a conversation between himself and his father, Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* remarks, in the tone of his father, “you cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt you like this” (112). Experiencing the time and agony of life as never-ending, Quentin confronts the prospect of death and suicide. Although he cannot bear the anguish of life-time any longer, he cannot equally bear to think that one day he will be dead and will no longer feel the pain to which he has become inured. In the end, Quentin chooses the

sterilization of suicide. When the agony of the *Macbeth*-ian “tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow” is confronted with the reality that someday life will end, consequently we see the paradox of time, which, so it seems, will only be resolved by a sterilizing death. In the case of Quentin Compson, the sterilizing effects of death prove to be the only manner through which he can stop time and eliminate his harrowing obsession with the past.

So, our concern is with life-time, or rather, with what the ending of life-time signifies. As we all know very well, all lives have a lifespan and death is inevitable. In *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, this inevitable and impartial death represents for Camus why no single life or way of living is better than another. From this notion, Camus draws his primary argument against suicide: the quantity of one’s experience matters most, and to keep living represents a revolt against death. Life is about revolt, and the only way to revolt against death, and hence against the absurd, is to keep living, to endure and persevere, similar in many ways to Faulkner’s Nobel Prize speech in which he declared, “I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure . . . I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail” (“William Faulkner: Banquet Speech”). Consequently, if the quantity of life-time is paramount, what do the deaths at various ages signify? If these significations are different, can we still consider death as impartial? Or, what implications are Faulkner and Camus making about death at specific ages? For both writers, infanticide serves an important metaphysical purpose, more so than the other types of death and murders. More specifically, when trying to comprehend the event or act of infanticide, the death itself is merely precursory and is only important insofar as it indicates a termination of the individual life-time. Once this notion is established, the death is no longer the area of concern, and, rather, our attention shifts to trying to understand what the quantity of life-time of those now ephemeral and

bracketed existences signify. Metaphysically, infanticide imports sterility, the ephemeralization of the perpetual, for it represents the death of *a* future, of *a* futurity implied within fertility, reproduction, and posterity.

Infanticide and the Family

In the Faulknerian and Camusian canons, infanticide only occurs a few times, yet, when it does occur, the scene or incident usually occasions a climax or becomes the work's focal point. For Faulkner, the only case of infanticide occurs in *Requiem for a Nun*, though Faulkner refrains from presenting the actual death of Temple Drake's (or Mrs. Gowan Stevens's) unnamed child. Camus presents the same scene in his adaption, yet there are other infanticidal examples in Camus's fiction. In *La Peste* (1949), we see the most vivid and painfully tragic death of a young boy during a modern day Black Death. Additionally, the discussion and intentions of infanticide are found in *Les Justes* (first staged in 1949), where Kaliayev, a Russian-Socialist revolutionary and assassin, fails to throw a bomb at the Grand Duke Sergei Romanov's passing carriage because the Duke's young niece and nephew are also in the carriage. After this first failed attempt, Kaliayev and his fellow revolutionaries discuss how they should proceed if the issue of throwing a bomb at a carriage with children arises on their second try. Finally, the issue of infanticide arises in *Le Malentendu* when Martha and La Mère kill a man whom they later realize is their estranged brother-son, Jan, who is actually an adult but, nonetheless, whose death similarly relates to the infanticide in *Requiem for a Nun*. This section will begin by analyzing how Faulkner and Camus present infanticide as signaling the destruction of the family and the sterilization of genealogy and posterity in *Requiem for a Nun* and *Le Malentendu*. Following these exegeses, I will concentrate on a philosophical and political analysis of what the Child

signifies and how Camus's *Les Justes* broaches a debate on whether infanticide is ever justifiable, even during revolutionary causes when the ultimate aim is for a better future.

Within the contexts of both Faulkner's and Camus's *Requiem for a Nun*, the death of Temple's baby, as presented on Faulkner's pseudo-stage and Camus's actual stage, signals not only the destruction of innocent life but also the dissolution of the Stevens family and the sterilization of the family's genealogical future. Since Faulkner constructs his story nonlinearly within the novel's playscript sections, we first learn of the murder; then, going back in time, we witness the events leading up to the murder. In Act One during the trial of Nancy Mannigoe, we learn that the Stevens's maid has killed Temple's second-born child. By Act Two Scene Two, we go back in time to the evening during which Nancy kills the infant. Hence, in this scene we see a type of resurrection of the infant. Yet, by the scene's end, the infant is dead once again, and, thus, this moment will be our primary focus. The death of Temple's baby marks the dissolution of the Stevens family: the baby is killed during a time when Temple intends to leave her husband, Gowan, for another man and has also sent away her eldest child, Bucky, to live with his grandmother. Act Two Scene Two begins with Temple and Nancy in an intense argument concerning Temple's readiness and willingness to leave her family. Moments before Nancy murders the infant, Temple admits that Nancy has been more than a housemaid to her family but, in fact, a kind of savior who held the Stevens together even during their worst hours. Apologizing to Nancy after yelling at her, Temple opines:

I'm sorry. Why do you force me to this—hitting and screaming at you, when you have always been so good to my children and me—my husband too—all of us—trying to hold us together in a household, a family, that anybody should have known all the time couldn't possibly hold together? even in decency, let alone happiness? (163)

Other than being darkly ironic for the reason that Nancy will soon finalize the disintegration of this family, Temple's words indicate that she is well aware of, if not desiring, her family's

dissolution. Temple suggests that this ongoing familial deterioration was inevitable, especially given the pasts of Gowan and Temple recounted in *Sanctuary*. The Temple Drake of *Requiem for a Nun* is not the same Temple Drake we see at the beginning of *Sanctuary* nor is she the same Temple Drake corrupted by Popeye and the Memphis brothel. Though I will focus solely on Temple's transformation in the second chapter, the Temple Drake of *Requiem for a Nun* is a woman forced to enter a loveless marriage and have children with a man that instigated most of her horrors in *Sanctuary*—Gowan abandons Temple, leaving her defenseless against hoards of depraved, libidinous men. Like Gowan's abandonment of Temple in *Sanctuary*, Temple now intends to abandon Gowan—abandonment and unreliability define their past; thus, Temple fittingly returns the deed and tries to end their marriage via abandonment.

Consequently, the Temple Drake of *Requiem for a Nun* finds herself physically trapped by a family she did not want and still emotionally and psychologically trapped in the Memphis brothel of *Sanctuary*. Eventually, Temple forcefully admits that despite her husband and her children, she will leave and flee with her lover, Pete. And as she walks to the nursery to kill the infant, Nancy tells Temple, "I tried everything I knowed. You can see that" (165). Nancy's final words to Temple are a bit puzzling, for we do not actually know to what she is referring. Nancy is likely referring to her efforts to keep this family together and to convince Temple not to abandon her two children. Her final words equally indicate that Nancy feels as though she has no other choice but to murder the child, for all other options have been exhausted and proven ineffective—obviously, this choice is morbidly ironic. Considering Temple's familial and marital entrapment, we find several possible reasons why Nancy kills the infant. First, Nancy might have committed the infanticide to punish Temple not only for leaving her family but also for sacrificing an innocent infant, essentially making the child Nancy's problem and

responsibility. Second, perhaps Nancy kills the infant to prevent Temple from running away. Third, Nancy might have killed the infant as a means of preventing the eventual suffering and neglect that the to-be-orphaned child would have to face. Fourth, both disgusted with yet pitying Temple, perhaps Nancy kills the infant in order to completely destroy the Stevens family, giving Temple what she wanted and releasing her of her familial and marital duties. And though the murder forces Temple to stay with her husband, their marriage is a marriage only in name, Temple's disdain for Gowan seems entirely immitigable. Finally, we notice that Bucky, the elder child, though technically alive, is, in fact, narratively dead and nonexistent, the Stevens family wholly disintegrated even though their patronym superficially remains. In each case the death of the child (the murdered child and the narratively absent child) not only marks the dissolution of the family but the end of a future assumed within posterity and genealogy—the future that the Child portends via upholding and perpetuating the family's patronym and legacy.

Comparable to *Requiem for a Nun*, the infanticide that occurs in *Le Malentendu* equally accentuates the death of the child as symbolic of the dissolution of the family and genealogical futurity. In this play, however, Camus questions the stability of the family structure as Jan's attempt to reunite with his family results in murder and suicide. Concurrently, in this play Camus presents an absurd world and god that seem to wholly oppose the traditional familial structure as this "god" incites the play's conclusive tragedy. Therefore, in this play's absurd storyworld, Camus denies any notion of futurity with regard to family, genealogy, or posterity as his absurd god plots against and fuels the destruction of Jan's family. First, the murdering of Jan by his mother and sister is indeed symbolic of this destruction, for Martha and La Mère subsequently commit suicide after learning that Jan was their estranged brother and son. Second, unlike the other examples of infanticide, Jan is an adult and as such does not necessarily

epitomize the same sense of fertility, newness, and innocence as an infant or adolescent. Nevertheless, he does symbolize a procreative fertility since he is married to Maria, suggesting the promise of propagation. Third, while it is Martha and Le Mère who kill Jan, we learn that Le Vieux, the old manservant, largely instigates this tragedy, for he is the absurd god of this storyworld who not only prevents the mother and daughter's awareness of Jan's identity but also calculatedly reveals Jan's identity following his murder and incites the subsequent mother-daughter suicides. With this promise of reunification and propagation, Le Vieux must uphold the absurd order by sterilizing this family and their future.

In this play, Camus suggests that the family as both an institution in itself and as a means of structuring time—that is, history and genealogy—is paradoxically sterile, predicting or instigating an end rather than a genesis. While Jan's desire to reconnect with his family is what paradoxically instigates their demise, we get the sense that this family, or possibly all families, was already doomed to deteriorate. First, Jan and his family have been estranged for many years, long enough apparently that neither his mother nor sister recognizes him upon his return. Second, Jan is hesitant about immediately revealing his identity for reasons of stirring trouble, and although he is supposed to be this story's hero, his indecisiveness becomes his hamartia, for his mother and sister kill him before he can make up his mind. For both these reasons, Camus depicts the family and familial relations as arbitrary, for familiarity can easily become foreignness as dictated by time and space; Jan and his family have certainly become complete strangers. Third, upon the discovery that she has murdered her son, La Mère utters in a toneless voice, "Allons, je savais bien qu'un jour cela tournerait de cette façon et qu'alors il faudrait en finir"²⁵ (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 225). Hence, we might discern *Le Malentendu* as an Oedipal tragedy, not only for the reason that estrangement and unfamiliarity induce murderous

²⁵ "Yes, I have known well that one day it would turn out this way, and then it would be the end."

tragedy between family members but also since La Mère's words suggest a type of self-fulfilled prophecy and, like Temple's words before her child's murder, equally indicate this air of familial doom.

Yet, even before La Mère's Oedipal realization and the murder of her son, we recognize this family's doom and deterioration for several other reasons. First, the reader of Camus's canon will note that *Le Malentendu* is intertextually connected to a newspaper article that Meursault reads in *L'Étranger*, the article detailing this play's tragic plot. Second, we remark the obvious dramatic irony, that La Mère and Martha, ignorant of Jan's identity, are plotting Jan's murder while Jan, trying to reconnect with his family, is ignorant of what really goes on in his family's motel. Third, at the play's beginning Jan abandons Maria and goes to his family's motel alone; consequently, he detaches himself from the one person who gives him the hope of a family and familial futurity while he ironically leads himself to his "other" family and his death. Fourth, we will also remark the diegetic absence of the biological father, as is the case throughout the Camusian canon. This absence, though, is not to say that a father is what holds a family together. Rather, this patriarchal absence indicates that the familial deterioration began even before the curtains open, that, in general, the family is always already deteriorating, as equally suggested by Jan's abandonment of Maria at the play's beginning.

While Camus proposes that the structure of the nuclear family is arbitrary and innately flawed and doomed to deteriorate, he ironically introduces his absurd god to insure this family's demise. While Le Vieux is merely the old manservant by title, his character symbolically plays the roles of the absent "father-figure" as well as the non-existent Father—Camus's absurd god. Consequently, Le Vieux is an ironic character because he comes to negate everything that the F/father are meant to represent traditionally and dogmatically, namely the protection and

preservation of the family. Le Vieux comes to clearly represent God at the play's end as he mistakenly responds to Maria's cries to God as a call for his help as well as the fact that "Le Dieu" rhymes with Le Vieux (244-5). Le Vieux equally embodies Le Dieu because he comes to represent the word of God (Logos). In the Camusian sense, nonetheless, Logos (or the word of Camus's "God") is antithetical to traditional Christian doctrine. In the final scene, Le Vieux's presence on stage, as usual, is marked as a type of materialization rather than an active entrance as his figure "appears" (*paraît*) from the darkness, he speaks with a firm and forceful voice, and responds to Maria's anguish and cries for help with a curt, assertive "Non!" (244-5). But this rejection is not merely his refusal to help her. Rather, it suggests a negation of all order and reason and is essentially a divine judgment or verdict, functioning as Maria's death sentence, for we imagine that she will either commit suicide or die of sorrow and misery. As such, the word of God becomes the word of death.

Thus, Le Vieux antithetically takes the form of both the F/father and Death and, both consequently and ironically, represents and induces sterility. Alternatively, we might simply say that he is a sterile character. For the most part, Le Vieux embodies sterility since his character is largely representative of absence—(1) the absence of theatric presence via corporeality and verbosity and (2) the absence of emotion—which illustrates Le Vieux as a lifeless and insentient character. Likewise, Camus's stage directions depict how Le Vieux constantly embodies absence even when he is technically "present." First, his character does very little on stage other than standing and sitting. Since he does not speak and rarely moves, we are usually reminded of his presence only when the stage directions mark his exiting, as he again becomes absent. Second, when he is on stage, silhouettes or reflections often mark his presence, which portrays his character not only as incorporeal and spectral but also as ominous and mysterious. Third, as I

already mentioned, Le Vieux's comings and goings are often described as materializations. Often, his presence is marked passively by the verb "paraître" or "apparaître" (to appear)—"le vieux domestique *paraît* dans l'encadrement," "le vieux domestique *apparaît* en haut de l'escalier," "la porte s'ouvre et le vieux domestique *paraît*"²⁶ (178; 224; 244). Additionally, his "presence" on stage is always transient, fugitive, and especially menacing since the other characters are usually unaware of his presence as he quickly appears and disappears from door frames or walks behind windows, looking at the characters inside the motel. The idea that he appears and disappears emphasizes his incorporeality and spectral presence-absence. Finally, he is the messenger who brings "the word" (though, they are wordless words) to Le Mère and Martha of the identity of the man they murdered, inciting both women's subsequent suicides (224-5). Accordingly, symbolic of the F/father, Le Vieux's presence in this play largely represents absence—the absence of the biological father and the absence of a just and sympathetic divine being. As father, Le Vieux's presence is indicative of the verbal and corporeal absence of the biological father and, thus, of the nuclear family's deterioration. As the Father, Le Vieux represents an ineffective, powerless, and emotionally sterile deity—his presence, in fact, symbolizes the absence of any divinity.

And this role as "God" is, perhaps, Le Vieux's most important role. But, how does Le Vieux as "God" instigate the infanticide and destruction of this family? As we read *Le Malentendu* and pay close attention to the well-crafted stage directions, we notice that Le Vieux's strange actions are much more calculated and diabolical than they purport. In the extremely brief Act One Scene Two, the stage directions note that Le Vieux, alone on stage and looking through the window, sees Jan approaching the motel. Le Vieux then hides behind the

²⁶ "the old manservant appeared in the door frame," "the old manservant appeared at the top of the stairs," "the door opened and the old manservant appeared"

window curtain. Upon entering, Jan notices Le Vieux hiding and sarcastically asks if anyone is there. Le Vieux then stares at Jan and subsequently exists without speaking a word and ending the scene (164). This peculiar scene leads us to wonder: Why did Le Vieux hide upon seeing Jan? Personal insecurities? Anthropophobia? Xenophobia? Or rather, does Le Vieux, being the “God” of this storyworld, immediately recognize Jan’s identity, a feat of which the mother and daughter are clearly incapable? Camus clarifies these questions later during the scene when Martha is checking Jan into the motel. Jan presents his passport to Martha, a moment which would have revealed Jan’s true identity and prevented the subsequent tragedy; however, at this moment, Le Vieux appears, yet again, in the doorway, distracting Martha. Martha dismisses Le Vieux, noting that she did not call him, and returns Jan’s passport without reading it (178). This scene functions primarily on three levels: (1) it serves as more dramatic irony; (2) it foreshadows the play’s climax, when Le Vieux reveals the passport to both Martha and La Mère after killing Jan; and (3) this scene reveals that the coincidence of events and consequences of this play are less innocuous and more intentional, silently calculated and instigated by Le Vieux. Allegedly, his impaired hearing is the reason for his “accidental” entrances on stage, yet these “accidents” serve a much greater purpose than just breaking the flow of action and dialogue. In this case, his presence serves to obstruct the truth, which exposes that Le Vieux *knows* the truth. While there are hints throughout the play that Le Vieux is aware of Jan’s identity and is scheming the family’s demise, our suspicions are finally justified when we see that while Le Mère and Martha are removing the clothing from Jan’s poisoned body, Le Vieux notices that Jan’s passport has fallen to the floor, picks it up, and hides it from the mother and daughter:

[Martha] fouille le veston et en tire un portefeuille dont elle compte les billets. Elle vide tous les poches du dormeur. Pendant cette opération, le passeport tombe et glisse

derrière le lit. Le vieux domestique va le ramasser sans que les femmes le voient et se retire”²⁷ (216).

Hence, we recognize that Le Vieux knows yet hides the truth from the mother and daughter and silently watches the tragedy ensue.

Consequently, this Camusian “God” is not a creator of life but an inciter of death²⁸. This conclusion does not effectively exonerate Martha and La Mère, for they would have killed whatever guest had checked in that day. Still, the daughter and mother are not to blame for the infanticide and the destruction of this family. Le Vieux is. Inciter of death, voice of unreason and disorder, Le Vieux witnesses the potential reunification of this family (the re-perpetuation of their genealogy), marked by Jan’s return with his wife. But sterility (death) is the goal, the desired end, the only truth. Thus, Le Vieux prevents this reunification and obstructs the disclosure of Jan’s identity. He is even present, though furtively, when Martha and La Mère collect and dispose of Jan’s poisoned body in the river, following them in the process to ensure they dump the body. Finally, only after the deed is done does Le Vieux decide to reveal Jan’s passport and identity. Revealing the passport at the beginning of Act Three Scene One, Le Vieux “appears”/materializes on stage at the top of a staircase, at the bottom of which is Martha and La Mère (224). As such, his descent down the staircase with the passport (the Truth) is highly symbolic of his status as God. Unlike the *deus ex machina* of ancient Greek theatre when a god descends from the heavens to resolve a hopeless situation, Le Vieux’s celestial descent (a reverse dénouement) does not resolve the tragedy but, rather, incites more tragedy as his divine revelation uncloaks a truth that deliberately foments the suicides of La Mère and Martha.

²⁷ “Martha searched the jacket and pulled out a wallet in which she counted the dollar bills. She emptied all of the sleeping man’s pockets. During this operation, the passport fell and slipped behind the bed. The old manservant goes to pick it up without the women seeing him and quietly slips away.”

²⁸ Though, philosophically, one could argue that the difference between “creator of life” and “inciter of death” is merely rhetorical, and essentially they can be positioned as contiguous.

Accordingly, Le Vieux's role in this play, while multifaceted, is mainly to assure the destruction of this family and secure sterility and death as the ultimate truth and revelation.

Infanticide and the Child

In *Les Justes*, we see infanticide become a topic of philosophical and political considerations instead of simply assuming the familial and genealogical significations presented in *Requiem for a Nun* and *Le Malentendu*. Still, like *Le Malentendu*, *Les Justes* raises Dostoyevskian questions of divine existence. In *Les Justes*, the question becomes, If a god does not exist, and thus everything, including murder, is permitted, is the killing of children equally permissible? The play further narrows this hypothetical to a question about political and humanitarian intentions and efforts of anti-totalitarian (and at the time, anti-czarist) terrorist groups. If the intentions of a revolution are to promote the "greater good" and "general welfare" and to end tyrants and tyrannies, is the murdering of children acceptable during the revolutionary process or within the crossfires if these murders constitute a means of reaching the end? Ultimately, for Camus, infanticide is never permitted regardless of the circumstances. And as E. Freeman remarks in his essay "Camus's *Les Justes*," this play is about limits, particularly the ethical limits of murder—infanticide being one such limit (79). Hence, we understand this play's title (translated *The Just Assassins*). Writing both this play and *L'Homme Révolté* at the same time, Camus endeavored to depict terrorists who were not morally hallow and bloodthirsty—Camus's ideal rebel being the just assassin. In *Les Justes*, however, infanticide never occurs, for these terrorists are just and ethical. For Freeman, Camus's choice of not committing infanticide is what keeps this play from completely succeeding as a modern tragedy (87-91). While I agree that *Les Justes* is less tragic than many of Camus's other works, I believe that Freeman fails to

fully understand the tragedy that arises from even considering the idea of infanticide as politically permissible, especially during an era when the exigency of revolution and change engendered unparalleled violence and desperation. The play's tragic energies equally force us to question whether we ourselves would or could ever justify killing children. We should also note that Camus committed a horrifying infanticide just two years early in *La Peste*. Perhaps, when considering the trajectory of the Camusian canon, the choice not to kill another child was one made strategically, to thematically bring life back inside his work. Furthermore, Camus's twins, coincidentally, were born in 1945 while he was working on *La Peste*—another possibility for why he may have favored life in *Les Justes*.

The lack of infanticide notwithstanding, as previously mentioned, *Les Justes* leads us to question the political and philosophical significances of killing children and coerces us to question our own values and humanity. Could we ourselves ever justify the killing of children? Of course, most of us would scream a curt “No!” Yet, would or could we ever dare to ponder a justification? Despite all heretical implications and potential vilifications, could we ever give credence to a justification and venture to an “anti-life” perspective? Another big question yet to be answered is: Why is the murdering of the Grand Duke's niece and nephew more tragic and less permissible than his own assassination? We could even make this question more general: Why is the killing of children more reproachable than the killing of adults? The answer seems fairly immediate and simple: children are young and innocent while adults are more worthy of guilt and susceptible to corruption and evil. But this difference seems a justification only when temporally isolated from the actual homicide. When Kaliayev approaches the Grand Duke's carriage and notices the children, the Grand Duke is no longer his concern. Nor is the assumed innocence of the niece and nephew the initial worry, though it does quickly become pertinent.

Would Kaliayev have thrown the bomb if the niece and nephew of the Grand Duke were demonic or destined to follow in the dictatorial footsteps of their uncle? Or would any of us kill a child who threatened our future existence?²⁹ Still, none of these questions and moral dilemmas, though stimulating and contentious, seems to bring us closer to the actual infanticidal event. Instead, they distance us from the actual event and displace one significant detail: the body of the Child. *Les Justes* is not just concerned with the killing of children for political or ideological reasons, but the play is equally concerned with what the Child's body and what the desecration or obliteration of this body signify. Of course, the latter arouses the question of how we define the Child and its body. For these reasons and others, we should not look at this issue as pertaining to the politically contemporary and speciously rhetorical opposition between the "pro-life" and "pro-choice" stances since they both actually proffer a *pro-life* stance and are oriented antithetically to an unheard of "anti-life" stance. Modern ultrasounds and sonograms aside, since the Child's body and the sight of the Child's body are our primary concern, the following discussion pertains only to the *extrauterine* body (mainly the extrauterine Child, but this term can equally refer to all the *present* living). Moreover, as our poetic hero Kaliayev affirms, the revolutionary's crusade should be for those who are living, breathing, and suffering in the present world, not for the unpredictable existence of a future generation and time:

D'autres . . . Oui! Mais moi, j'aime ceux qui vivent aujourd'hui sur la même terre que moi, et c'est eux que je salue. C'est pour eux que je lutte et que je consens à mourir. Et pour une cité lointaine, dont je ne suis pas sûr, je n'irai pas frapper le visage de mes frères. Je n'irai pas ajouter à l'injustice vivante pour une justice morte.³⁰ (65)

²⁹ Such question was equally broached and answered in the popular 1976 horror movie *The Omen*, wherein the anthropomorphized son of Satan, who is a mere toddler, must be murdered by its earthly father in order to save humanity.

³⁰ "Others . . . yes! But me, I like those who are living today on the same earth as me, and it's them that I salute. It's for them that I fight and agree to die. And for the sake of a distant city which I am not sure even exists, I will not strike the faces of my brothers. I will not add to the living injustice for the sake of a dead justice."

Revolution is not to fight for what is uncertain and amorphous but rather for what is present and obtainable. Shall I dare say that the intrauterine fetus is the uncertain and amorphous? This adjudgment is not to say that the intrauterine lacks any potentiality, but the intrauterine's potentiality is far different from that of the extrauterine. The intrauterine's potentiality is that of parturition, of eventually becoming the extrauterine and taking her/his future place in humanity's genealogy. The intrauterine is a wish for a hope. For this reason, we cannot yet ascribe hope or the hope of futurity to the intrauterine, for its "body" and existence are, however, still extremely uncertain, amorphous, and precarious—we are all aware of the many possible complications that come with pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care. The existence of the extrauterine, on the other hand, is more structured, unquestionable, and evident, for the extrauterine body is right in front our eyes, breathing, walking, developing, and has now shown the potential to live on. Therefore, to fight for the intrauterine's future is only to fight for posterity, so that the human race may merely exist and continue to exist. Nevertheless, this notion leads us to question whether this world in its current climate and conditions is worthy of propagation or can even support posterity. To fight for the extrauterine's future is to fight for the quality of life, to make sure that those who are already living and suffering are not only to continue living but also to live well. To fight for the extrauterine, consequently, would equate to an indirect fight for the eventual life and quality of life of the (to-be)-intrauterine, for one could assume that improving the quality of life for the current populations would hopefully endure for future generations.

Thus, our focus is on the extrauterine's body, specifically the body of the Child. But what exactly does the Child's body signify? The infantile or juvenile body, of course, symbolizes those excessively sentimental qualities of purity, innocence, and hope. Perhaps more

importantly, the Child's body signifies development and nascence. This body still possesses a quality of being unmarked and limitless, not yet restricted by the barrage of cultural and social markings that later come to bracket and shackle adults. At the same time nonetheless, the Child is not immune to the Symbolic order of the parents and family; and surely, the Child could come to perpetuate the same signifiers via heritage, family values, education, discrimination, stereotyping, individual experience, intuition—and the list goes on. Even still, an interval exists between the Child's body and the parental bodies. This interval does not just denote physical and generational separation but, rather, an existential detachment. For example, when a parent declares, "This is my daughter/son," the parent implicitly specifies, in a somewhat performative manner mirroring the actual birth of the Child, the two largest signifiers that identify children: sex and lineage. The first is important because in time it will socially inscribe gender expectations on the Child's body. The second, though, is immediately important, for the parent establishes origin, the Child's place in history and genealogy. The Child's body signifies the parents. Or rather, the Child's body signifies the ephemeral existences of the parents. Through the birth and the adding of another generation to their genealogy and the human race, the parents incidentally demarcate their enclosed position along the grandparent-parent-child continuum and, in doing such, retrace their ephemeral existences—their deaths. Thus, while the Child signifies—or, to use a Derridean term, is a trace of—the parents, the Child's body equally represents the opposite of the parents. As the trace of the parents and as the Child lives on, the Child's body then shows death back to the parents, or to any adult, not in that the Child itself represents death but instead represents the progression of time and the coming of their deaths. Rather, the Child seems to always signify life, potential, futurity, but through this symbolization, the Child's body simultaneously forecasts the deaths of everyone else.

In our biologically restrained world, if something shows life, it must equally adumbrate death: life must bring death, but death does not mean more life. Logically, to murder the Child would not consequentially equate to a preclusion of this death symbol. To kill the life-death symbol of the Child would seem to reemphasize twofold the death-half of the symbol. First, to kill the Child, as a symbol of new life, would qualify the Child's life as definitively ephemeral (according to the word's etymological meaning), for the Child, relatively speaking and compared to the entire history of human existence, had barely lived at all. Second, to kill the Child, as a symbol of biological, historical progression and death, would highlight both the precariousness of life and the destruction of the biological and genealogical future. If the Child represents death because her/his new life means the death of everyone else, then the death of the Child, as a result, would signify a sterilization of the biological timeline. If we have already recognized our deaths through the Child's body and if the Child is then murdered, what then lies ahead except for our previously forecasted deaths without that perceivable hope and kinetic energy of the extrauterine Child?

Of course, one could merely suggest that life and procreation are cyclical, that the death of the extrauterine Child is always subsequently counterbalanced by the prospective life of the (to-be)-intrauterine Child, whose body would accordingly come to represent the same futurity and hope—hence, the Western obsession with the Spring and renaissance. Such a claim still evades several significant points. First, though our world has proven incidentally that new life tends to follow death, such a claim is not an absolute truth but is merely a happenstance and contingency. Life can bring more life and will always bring death, but death never brings new life since death is, at least in the perceivable, earthly world, essentially sterilizing. Following this logic, present life is what carries importance and is to be cherished, supported, uplifted—not

the uncertain and unstructured futures of the to-be-intrauterine. If we assume all hope and futurity in the intrauterine, in “reproductive futurism,”³¹ and if one day we reach the point (which presently seems not too distant) when this world can no longer sustain or produce new life, all that will remain is death, and we will have surely reached a world with no future and no hope. Second, one could use such a claim to deny the significance and potential of the present living, or even their right to life, suggesting a kind of interchangeability and replaceability of one life with or for another to-be-life. But, as already mentioned, if the interchangeability or replaceability of life becomes impractical or impossible, we again are left only with death, no future, no hope, for we had forgotten, denied, and negated the future and potential of all the extrauterine bodies.

This notion, in fact, seems to be the cardinal argument against infanticide in *Les Justes*. The goal of the revolution, as both Kaliayev and Stepan remark, is to uphold human honor and humanity against those who have sought to destroy, dehumanize, and deem certain lives abject and unworthy of mercy. Simply, this communist revolution seeks a future where families are not starving and homeless while others eat voraciously and spend prodigally. First, promoting and fighting for humanity while simultaneously killing extrauterine children is a hypocritical revolutionary tactic. Second, if the revolution is to fight for a better future for the extrauterine but is to deem infanticide permissible, it would seem that the latter would theoretically negate the former, for what perceivable future are we fighting for with murdered extrauterine children? The words of Kaliayev fortify this concern. Upon returning from his first failed assassination attempt, Kaliayev tries to justify his hesitations and avers, “Je ne pouvais pas prévoir . . . Des enfants, des enfants surtout. As-tu regardé des enfants? Ce regard grave qu’ils ont parfois . . . Je

³¹ This term is taken from Lee Edelman’s book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*.

n'ai jamais pu soutenir ce regard . . ."³² (54). Kaliayev could not throw the bomb because he saw the children, their eyes, their grave visages, so obviously these faces meant something to him, something strong enough to momentarily override his murderous and revolutionary alacrity. His impression of the children's faces as dour and solemn seems the reason for his hesitation. As Stepan suggests, one could say that Kaliayev, as a poet, is simply too sentimental. However, there seems to be more to his hesitation, to his ethics and morals as a revolutionary terrorist. And the children's grave faces seem to signify something more than just puerile unhappiness. It seems, instead, that Kaliayev understands the paramountcy of the Child's life to his revolutionary cause. When he sees the faces of the Grand Duke's niece and nephew, he does not see the visages of tyrannical lineage since that existential interval between the Child and the adult relative initially occludes such an immediate connection. Instead, he sees the grave, grim, sad, and suffering faces of every child in the Russian Empire, or perhaps in the world, for whom he is supposed to be fighting. To throw his bomb would then mean to negate his struggle and efforts by sterilizing (ephemeralizing) the Child's existence and the future of the presently living humanity.

Overall, the Child (both intrauterine and extrauterine) does not wholly assume *the future*; however, this section focuses on the futurity fostered within the Child—that is, a futurity relative to genealogy, posterity, and the continuation of humanity. The Child is not *our* future but we must not forget that the Child has *a* future, one that is existentially distinct from our own, yet again, as tendered by the existential interval between the Child and everyone else. Though the Child does not metaphysically or ontologically change our futures, that is, the fact that our time is more limited than the Child's time, if we understand that the Child holds a place *beyond* our

³² I could not have foreseen this . . . Children, children especially. Have you seen children? This grave look that they sometimes have . . . I can never stand this look . . ."

time, that is, a time after our deaths, we then understand the Child as upholding humanity's future but not the future of the individuals within humanity. As such, the death of the Child, again, does not change the fact that our time is limited or that we still have a remaining future within that limited time; nevertheless, the Child's death transitively symbolizes the sterilization of humanity's futurity, that is, a human presence succeeding our own. In *Les Justes*, the revolution is to ensure primarily a better life for the extrauterine, but resultantly the revolution is also to safeguard that this better life prevails in those generations after our own, for the extrauterine youth and their (to-be)-intrauterine.

CHAPTER 2

THE STERILIZATION OF SEX(UALITY) AND THE STERILIZATION OF IDENTITY

With the Child and what the Child's body signifies in mind, let us move on to the sterilization of sex(uality). Yet again, I will ascribe a temporal understanding to sex(uality), or rather, how gender and sexuality produce various understandings of time. If we are to apprehend the Child as assuming a role in futurism and in the works of Faulkner and Camus, then sex and sexuality have everything to do with time. However, this understanding of reproductive futurism is heteronormative, not only for the reason that biology restricts procreation to heterosexual sex and insemination but also since reproduction (especially fertility and virility) and posterity are desired and considered virtuous among the heteroreproductive populace. For this reason, this section will consider the theoretical differences between feminine and masculine conceptions of time apart from procreativity and will be followed by a third chapter on the existence of a "queer time" in the Faulknerian and Camusian canons—a time at variance with and often wholly contrary to the heterosexually valorized reproductive futurism or, as I will later call it, genealogical futurism.

This section will begin by exploring how Faulkner and Camus present masculine and feminine time. Establishing the difference between feminine and masculine modes of time, I will use the theories of feminine temporality as proposed within the writings of Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray to aid our understanding of how the masculine and feminine differ. I will argue that both authors present masculine time (linear and teleological) as domineering and superincumbent, often suppressing or effacing those modes of time that deviate from linearity and teleology, hence, generally a feminine mode of time but also, as I will later

discuss, queer temporal modalities. In this chapter I will analyze the sterilizing effects of the masculine on the temporal experiences of Temple Drake in *Sanctuary* and Janine in “La Femme Adultère” from *L’Exil et le Royaume*. However, the case does not always persist that the masculine sterilizes the feminine; rather, the opposite is often true, when the feminine indeed emasculates or, as I will later explain, castrates the masculine. In what follows this conception, I will analyze the emasculation and metaphorical castrations of Quentin and Jason Compson in *The Sound and the Fury*. I will also discuss how the castration of Benjy Compson is indicative of a sterilization of identity: his family anatomically castrates him and then temporally castrates him as they send him away to an asylum. In Camus’s oeuvre, there is not an example of a feminine-induced emasculation or castration of masculine time as direct as in Faulkner’s, probably because women play, for the most part, much smaller roles than male characters in the Camusian canon. Nevertheless, I will use my analyses of gendered time to transition to an examination of queer time in this study’s third chapter. Building up the major topics of the Child, reproductive futurism, and feminine and masculine temporal modalities, my discussion of queer time will focus on Quentin and Camus’s Caligula, specifically how their psychologies reveal many similarities, namely repressed desires and manifest jouissance that reveal homoerotic and transgendered qualities as well as their desires for self-annihilation.

Understanding the difference between masculine time and feminine time, I often turn to the French feminists Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, for they each present a uniquely different explanation of feminine time within different theoretical contexts, including semiotics, linguistics, sociology, psychoanalysis, and sexuality. Resorting to the theories of Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigaray, I intend not to suggest that their theories represent unequivocally *the* feminine experience; rather, I consider the French feminists in this study because their

theories, I feel, best help to elucidate the unique temporal modalities that Temple and Janine experience in their respective stories. Furthermore, their individual theories always stress a feminine opposition to a masculine linearity, teleology, and history that is ever so rampant in the Faulknerian and Camusian canons. To begin our understanding of the difference between masculine and feminine, I turn to Kristeva's essay "Le Temps des Femmes" (1979) wherein she explains that feminine time retains a sense of repetition and eternity:

D'un côté: cycles, gestation, éternel retour d'un rythme biologique De l'autre côté, et peut-être par conséquent, la présence massive d'une temporalité monumentale, sans faille et sans fuite, qui a si peu à voir avec le temps linéaire qui passé que le nom même de temporalité ne lui convient pas, et qui, englobante et infinie comme l'espace imaginaire, fait penser . . . aux mythes de résurrection qui, dans toutes les croyances, perpétuent la trace d'un culte maternel antérieur ou concomitant et jusqu'à son élaboration le plus récente, la chrétienne, pour laquelle le corps de la Vierge Mère ne meurt pas mais passé, dans le même temps, d'un espace dans l'autre³³ (7)

Kristeva aligns the feminine with not only a sense of cyclical and circular time but also what she calls "monumental" time, a time that suggests eternity and is more concerned with spatiality than the progress of history. Irigaray makes a similar statement about this sense of monumental time in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1984), commenting on the cosmogonic ordering of time and space and the inversion of time and space in sexual difference:

In the beginning was space and the creation of space, as is said in all theogonies. The gods, God, first create space. And time is there, more or less, in the service of space. On the first day, the first days, the gods, God, make a world by separating the elements. This world is then peopled, and a rhythm is established among its inhabitants. God would be time itself, lavishing or exteriorizing itself in its action in space, in places.

Philosophy then confirms the genealogy of the task of the gods or God. Time becomes the interiority of the subject itself, and space, its exteriority The subject,

³³ "On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm On the other hand, and perhaps as a consequence, there is a massive presence of monumental temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits: All-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space, this temporality reminds one of . . . the various myths of resurrection which, in all religious beliefs, perpetuate the vestige of an anterior or concomitant maternal cult, right up to its most recent elaboration, Christianity, in which the body of the Virgin Mother does not die but moves from one spatiality to another within the same time" ("Women's Time" 16-17)

the master of time, becomes the axis of the world's ordering with its something beyond the moment and eternity: God[s]. [This God(s)] effects the passage between time and space. *Which would be inverted in sexual difference? Where the feminine is experienced as space, but often with connotations of the abyss and night . . . while the masculine is experienced as time.* (7; my italics)

Thus, like Kristeva, Irigaray links the feminine with spatiality and eternity. According to the cosmogony of most theogonies, space was created before time, man before woman, and for Irigaray this ordering initially links the masculine with space and the feminine with time. But as a rhythm and custom became established, especially in the case of sexual difference, space and time, masculine and feminine were inverted, for it now seems the case that femininity is experienced as a space and masculinity conceived of in terms of time.

And why else would writers and philosophers for centuries refer to “Father” Time and “Mother” Earth (or Species)? But the association of the feminine with space is not to say that the feminine does not have a specific time; rather, this feminine time is eclipsed by an oppressive masculine, which has seemingly become the standard conception of temporality. In “Castration or Decapitation?” (originally “Le Sexe ou la Tête?”), Cixous makes clear the oppressiveness of masculine time, citing as an example an ancient Chinese story about an army general ordered to make soldiers out of his king's one hundred and eighty wives. During the training, the general taught the wives how to walk in unison according to the “language of the drumbeat” (42). Upon hearing these orders and the drumbeats, instead of complying, the women broke out in laughter. Irritated by this intractability, the king ordered the decapitation of the two head wives as to make examples out of them. In her analysis of this story, Cixous explains that the masculine is an ordered and indoctrinating time, “governed by a rule that keeps time with two beats, three beats, four beats, with pipe and drum” (42). For Cixous, feminine time, however, is more disorderly and less definable than the feminine times of Kristeva and Irigaray. Yet, this disorderliness

carries a positive signification for Cixous since the feminine ridicule of masculine time, of the inane officiousness of the intervallic drumbeats, suggests an intransigence that fittingly interrupts and upsets the masculine. And still, when the emasculating, disorderly feminine time indeed interrupts and undermines (castrates) the masculine, the masculine immediately retaliates by decapitating the feminine, silencing her voice, her laugh, her defiance in an attempt to restore masculine order and dominance. For Cixous, although the masculine will respond disproportionately to feminine intransigence and the anxiety of castration with a desperate effort to restore male order, the feminine disorder is never completely silenced and the masculine order never completely restored. Masculine time requires that the male mourn, resign to his loss(es), to his castration, to the cause-effect linearity of an irredeemable past. The feminine loses without mourning, without holding onto loss, for the feminine time stresses not the origin, the outcome/end, or the supposed linear causality that connects origin to end; instead, the feminine is unbounded and endless (53-54). For Cixous, the feminine is “neither outside nor in,” and recalling Kristeva and Irigaray, resists the interiority of masculine time, assuming a temporality “all-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space” (Cixous 54; Kristeva 16).

Applying Kristeva’s, Irigaray’s, and Cixous’s theories and arguments to Faulkner’s and Camus’s canons, we see a striking similarity between the relationships of Temple Drake and Popeye in *Sanctuary* and of Janine and Marcel in “La Femme Adultère,” especially the concept of a masculine castration anxiety reacting with sexism and misogyny (metaphorical decapitation) with the goal of re-objectifying, interiorizing, and suppressing the feminine. To avoid confusion or the accusation of an incorrect comparison, there are also significant differences between these two relationships. Janine and Marcel are husband and wife, and, presumably, they mutually agreed on their union whereas the “relationship” between Temple and Popeye is one of rape,

abduction, and enslavement. Accordingly, my goal is not to imply that Marcel, who Janine often describes as a decent, kind, hardworking man, is as comparably worthy of opprobrium as Popeye. However, my goal will be to illuminate in both cases—the one seemingly innocuous, the other explicitly reprehensible—a masculine time that, when threatened with emasculation, sexual sterility, and impotence, reacts by precluding and sterilizing (with devastating success) an emerging and threatening feminine time. Following these examples, I will then refer to the cases of Quentin and Jason Compson, whose senses of time are effectively emasculated and castrated by their sister, Caddy, and her daughter, so much so, in fact, that Quentin and Jason retaliate, to no avail, by attempting to reestablish a masculine order. I will also refer to the (temporal) castration of Benjy Compson relative to his position as a character deemed abject by his family, whose anachronistic morality consequently *castrates* their youngest child's life-time, for not only is he physically castrated but also he is eventually sent away to an asylum where, essentially, he is to die.

In *Sanctuary* and “La Femme Adultère,” Temple and Janine find themselves unwillingly displaced from their homes by male characters: Temple is raped and abducted by Popeye and taken to a brothel in Memphis; Janine is taken on her husband's painfully long business trip across Algeria, not because she is simply Marcel's wife and accompanying her spouse on a getaway but essentially because she is one of his employees. In the beginning of *Sanctuary*, Faulkner introduces a young, ingenuous, and carefree Temple Drake, a simple sorority débutante who relishes in her sociality and the ceremonious living of the Southern aristocracy. By mid-book, kidnapped and thrown in a brothel, Temple consumes the culture of the Memphis underground and progressively exhibits sexual frustration and confusion as she eventually expresses her desire to become a man. By the end we see Temple's identity completely effaced;

the girl who at the beginning was described as constantly moving, ebullient, frivolous, and independent has now degenerated into a state of insufferable and abject lethargy, her mind assumed by a chasmic nothingness, her being awaiting the ultimate sterility of death. In “*La Femme Adultère*” we are introduced to a middle-aged, diffident, and listless Janine who seems stuck emotionally, romantically, and, quite literally, physically, for she and Marcel are on an agonizingly slow bus ride. Janine often questions how she has acquired her present body and life, remembering her years as a young, confident, flirtatious gymnast. We also notice her sexual frustration: Marcel seems sexually, if not entirely, uninterested in his wife. Camus equally suggests that Marcel is likely impotent or sterile, and Janine mentions several times the fact that they have yet to, or ever will, propagate. However, as the day passes to night, Janine has a brief outburst of frenzied desire, leaving her husband in bed and dashing out into the desert where a sensation of liberation and sexual *jouissance* comes over her. However, once the *jouissance* passes and the hope of liberation abates, Janine returns to her bed, her husband, weeping and intimating an air of defeat.

Thus, in both stories, Temple and Janine find themselves hurled into an abyss of existential degradation and degeneration that renders both women in states of nihilistic hopelessness. But what do these transformations say about how Temple and Janine experience time, or, rather, how their understandings and experiences of time change drastically because of an overwhelming masculine control? When we first meet Temple and Janine within their respective stories, we indeed meet two completely different women—their appearance, their age, their romantic lives, their prospects, everything about them would seem initially in opposition. For this reason, both characters deserve individual attention paid to their particular circumstances. Even still, their stories do share that same quality of a distinctly feminine time

and reality at difference to a belligerent masculinity that deliberately threatens the very survival of the feminine. And although they fight (nonviolently) and attempt to abscond and debase their masculine manacles, in the end, despite their appreciable though obscured triumphs, both Temple and Janine find themselves without time, without futurity except for that masculine linearity leading them directly towards death.

Temple

Introducing his reader to a young and vivacious Temple Drake, Faulkner's opening description of this ingenuous teenager insinuates that Temple (her body, her image, her quiddity) exists outside of or transcends time. At the same time, Faulkner also introduces Temple in a scene filled with collegiate and non-collegiate boys who are almost obnoxiously watchful of her every move, as if she were their prey, their game. However, Faulkner complicates this situation by placing, in fact, Temple as the dominant in this predation dyad—her prey, the many onlooking male suitors:

Townspeople taking after-supper drives through the college grounds or an oblivious and bemused faculty-member or a candidate for a master's degree on his way to the library would see Temple, a snatched coat under her arm and *her long legs blonde with running, in speeding silhouette* against the lighted windows of the Coop . . . *vanishing into the shadow* beside the library wall, and perhaps *a final squatting swirl of knickers* or whatnot as she sprang in the car waiting there with engine running on that particular night. . . . [T]he town boys, *lounging in attitudes of belligerent casualness*, with their identical hats and upturned collars, *watched her enter the gymnasium upon black collegiate arms* and *vanish in a swirling glitter upon a glittering swirl of music*, with her high delicate head and her bold painted mouth and soft chin, her eyes blankly right and left looking, cool, *predatory*, and discreet.

Later, the music wailing beyond the glass, they would watch her through the windows as *she passed in swift rotation from one pair of black sleeves to the next*, her waist shaped slender and urgent in the interval, *her feet filling the rhythmic gap with music*. Stooping they would drink from flasks and light cigarettes, then erect again, *motionless* against the light . . . *like a row of hatted and muffled busts cut from black tin and nailed to the window-sills*. (*Sanctuary* 28-29; my italics)

In this excerpt, Faulkner illustrates Temple as being in constant motion, both purposeful and aimless, though throughout the novel Faulkner insinuates that Temple moves only without thought or objective. Nevertheless, this passage certainly evokes at the very least a desire and visceral motive to her motion even if evading a productive and practical rationale. Temple's body, her image are described as constantly vanishing and reappearing, rotating and swirling. Thus, her movement seems not only impetuous and frivolous but also furtive and stealthily predacious as if she is trying to conceal herself and her intentions and to deceive her spectatorial, voyeuristic male audience. While the nocturnal intentions and sexual prospects of the "black collegiate arms" and town boys are quite obvious from their disposition of paradoxically "belligerent casualness," Temple, however, in her aimless swirling and twirling, stymies her male counterparts' desires to progress from juvenescent sociality to bedroom intimacy. Consequently, as we read in the above passage, while Temple swirls about the gymnasium, the men are described as "motionless" and "nailed to the window-sills," almost completely inactive as their presence is only meant to assist Temple's dancing from "one pair of black sleeves to the next" or to attribute a pathetic futility to this scene's pervasive voyeurism. Consequently, Faulkner depicts an initial contrast between the feminine and the masculine gravid with Cixous's theory regarding sexual difference. Temple is disorderly and frivolous yet discreet and predacious; she has no schedule, no ultimate goal for her evening, no purpose to her frivolous dancing, and yet her entire image and movement denies the masculine gazes and desires and immobilizes their bodies.

Yet, both this passage and Faulkner's novel present other initial contrasts between feminine and masculine modalities of time. If we analyze this passage according to the theories of Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous, we see a unique distinction between the masculine and the

feminine wherein a feminine time disrupts, if only temporarily, a masculine order. In “Le Temps des Femmes” Kristeva defines masculine time as “projet, téléologie, déroulement linéaire et prospectif; le temps du départ, du cheminement et de l’arrivée, bref le temps de l’histoire”³⁴ which is commensurate with Horace Benbow’s claim that “nature is ‘she’ and *Progress* is ‘he’” (Kristeva 7; *Sanctuary* 15; my italics). Kristeva also notes the masculine temporality in linguistics and syntax:

On peut y ajouter, en outre, que ce temps [le temps masculin], appelons-le linéaire, est celui de langage comme énonciation de phrase (syntagme nominal + syntagme verbal; topic-comment; début-fin) et qu’il se soutient de sa butée qui est d’ailleurs celle de cette énonciation-là, la mort.³⁵ (7)

Applying a Kristevan understanding of syntax and logic to Faulkner’s text, in general, we note the masculinity of the Faulknerian enunciation. In fact, Sartre describes the Faulknerian sentence as the “And . . . and . . . and then” style of chronological addition (*La Nouvelle Revue Française* 52.1 1058). However, in this passage describing Temple, this progressive, sequential *and* is lacking, at least in the usage of diegetic addition, and, instead, we see an insistence on simultaneity or, even, atemporality. This insistence on a time other than the progressive, linear time of the masculine is recognized initially in the profusion of present participles—*vanishing, waiting, running, lounging, swirling, glittering, squatting, stooping, wailing, filling* and so on. The present participles, whether used verbally or adjectivally, evoke an action in the continuous aspect, the effect of which is an extension of duration and processual incompleteness (denoted by the imperfect tense) of what would naturally be finite activity and sequentially discrete events. Hence, the profusion of present participles insists on the simultaneity of various actions and

³⁴ “project, teleology, linear and prospective unfolding; time as departure, progression, and arrival; in short, the time of history.”

³⁵ “One can add, in addition, that this time [masculine time], call it linear, is that of language as the enunciation of sentences (nominal syntagm + verbal syntagm; topic-comment; beginning-end), and that it is supported by its own stumbling block, which is also the stumbling block of that enunciation—death.”

atemporal description rather than diegetic sequentiality, potentially highlighting another preliminary distinction between feminine time and masculine linearity.

Equally opposed to masculine linearity is the immediate imagery of circles and spirals in this passage, especially the chiasmic structure that Faulkner uses within these images: Temple “[vanishes] in a swirling glitter upon a glittering swirl of music.” The chiasmic structure of the “swirling glitter . . . glittering swirl” not only notes the circularity and frivolity of Temple’s movements but also highlights a phantasmagoric quality in her description. With the notion of phantasmagoria, we notice both phantasmatic (fantasy and phantasm) and phantomatic (spectral) elements in Temple’s description, though both qualities are essentially inseparable. Faulkner stresses the incorporeality of Temple’s body, movement, and existence, especially with her vanishing, swirling, and glittering and with the account that Temple’s body vanishes within the transient music and, in fact, her body actually becomes the music as her “feet [fill] the rhythmic gap with music.” Moreover, the chiasmus and the phantasmagoria emphasize spatiality rather than temporality: Temple’s body, although seemingly incorporeal, moves from place to place within space in a dreamlike, or spectral, sequence of surreal description. This incorporeality and phantasmagoria evoke what Kristeva notes as monumental time (“all-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space”) and what Irigaray deduces as the cosmogonic connection between the feminine and spatiality.

But, as I have already suggested, Temple’s metaphysical experience changes across the novel’s trajectory, and, hence, we must now consider Popeye and his influence on Temple’s metaphysics. When Popeye and Temple first meet, we immediately recognize that Popeye seems threatened by Temple, especially by her flirtatiousness and presumptuousness. As Temple slowly emasculates and aggravates Popeye, he eventually responds by raping and abducting her,

his attempt to reassert his masculinity and silence Temple's derisive and threatening femininity. In the previous excerpt, Faulkner notes the tension between the masculine and the feminine with not only the voyeuristic and belligerently casual male audience but also Temple's "predatory" disposition. Her predacious mien is significant when she first meets Popeye, for we notice Popeye's insecurities and fear of emasculation that stem from various reasons, primarily his appearance and impotence. Temple's predacity consists of two components: coquetry and derision. Faulkner suggests that because Temple is a gorgeous young woman, often the men in her life willingly do everything for her, and, as a result, she can easily resort to coquetry to get what she wants. While stranded with Gowan, at the Old Frenchman Place after a car accident, Temple runs into Popeye during a panic, and Faulkner writes, "Without ceasing to run she appeared to pause. Even her flapping coat did not overtake her, yet for an appreciable instant she faced Popeye with a grimace of taut, toothed coquetry. He did not stop; the finicking swagger of his narrow back did not falter" (48). Even in a panic, Temple instinctively resorts to flirtatiousness, trying to charm Popeye into helping her. Popeye, though, responds impertinently, his walk redolent with mincing fastidiousness. Thus, Faulkner presents a curious arrangement: Temple flirts with a man who responds to her coquettishness with an affected and effeminate gait. Thus, this moment impels us to question Popeye's sexuality, even before we recognize his dearth of sexual virility. And soon after this aforementioned encounter, we see that Popeye indeed seems threatened by Temple, particularly when she again tries to flirt with him and coax him into driving herself and Gowan back to Jefferson: "'Say,' she said, 'don't you want to drive us to town?'" (49). Temple's question is rhetorically strategized as less interrogative and more boldly intrusive and presumptuous as she tries to flirtatiously manipulate Popeye by imposing her needs and desires on this mysterious man. Popeye quickly responds negatively, to which

Temple responds by prying presumptuously and condescendingly, “Come one. . . . Be a sport” (49). Though Temple’s asking of Popeye to be a “sport” is probably a consequence of her ingenuousness, the imperative itself could be read as patronizing, especially since Popeye then responds with an invective: “Make your whore lay off of me, Jack [Gowan]” (49). Popeye’s castigatory imperative to Gowan is obviously not only a demand that Gowan control his girlfriend but also an insult at Temple, revealing that her effrontery is angering him. Temple, of course, responds with more direct mockery, first, ridiculing Popeye about his appearance: “What river did you fall in with that suit on? Do you have to shave it off at night?”; and second, by shouting, “You mean old thing!” at Popeye as he stands menacingly still and silent, coldly staring at the agitated, impetuous young woman. Popeye’s disposition indicates that Temple’s insults have aggravated him indeed. The relationship between Temple and Popeye becomes more complex and abusive as the novel continues; however, this altercation highlights the victim-victimizer dialectic of their relation, as both Temple and Popeye constantly vacillate between both sides. Still, in this scene, we notice the building tension between Temple and Popeye, especially Temple’s attempts to use her femininity to manipulate and ridicule Popeye and Popeye’s reaction of trying to reassert his masculinity.

The complexity of Temple and Popeye’s victim-victimizer relationship notwithstanding, in the pages leading up to the infamously egregious rape scene, Popeye assumes predominantly the role of the victimizer. As such, his role as victimizer aims toward subduing and silencing the presumptuously derisive and impetuous Temple. But, Popeye is not merely interested in overpowering Temple and asserting some notion of masculine superiority; rather, Popeye wants to corrupt her, control her, and transform her into an obedient sex slave—Temple has already proven herself flirtatious, but she must be made biddable and sexually willing. As a result,

Popeye would have not only subdued and reasserted his masculine, authoritative desires over a woman who simultaneously arouses and threatens him but also proved his masculinity to the numerous men who notice his “queer” and fastidious idiosyncrasies and his dainty physique (4). Popeye’s first step towards controlling and corrupting Temple is by raping her with a corncob.

In Faulkner’s suggestively gruesome³⁶ rape scene, we indeed remark the beginning of Temple’s transformation, especially the sterilization of her identity. In this scene, Faulkner begins Temple’s transformation by slowly breaking down her sensory acuity as Popeye approaches and violates her—the rape eventually representing a consummate effacement and replacement of her original identity with the identity of her victimizer. The scene begins with Popeye killing Tommy, who is both guarding and making approaches at Temple. Following the murder as Popeye approaches Temple, Faulkner writes:

To Temple, sitting in the cottonseed-hull and the corncobs, the sound [of the gun] was no louder than the striking of a match: *a short, minor sound shutting down upon the scene, the instant, with a profound finality*, completely isolating it, and *she sat there, her legs straight before her, her hand limp and palms-up on her lap*, looking at Popeye’s tight back and the ridges of his coat across, against his flank, wisping thinly along his leg.

He turned and looked at her. *He waggled the pistol slightly* and put it back in his coat, then he walked toward her. *Moving, he made no sound at all*; the released door yawned and clapped against the jamb, but *it made no sound either*; it was as though *sound and silence had become inverted*. *She could hear silence in a thick rustling as he moved toward her through it, thrusting it aside*, and she began to say *Something is going to happen to me*. She was saying it to the old man with the yellow clots for eyes. “*Something is happening to me!*” she screamed at him, sitting in his chair in the sunlight, his hands crossed on the top of the stick. “I told you it was!” she screamed, *voiding the words like hot silent bubbles into the bright silence* about them until he turned his head and the two phlegmcots above her where she lay tossing and trashing on the rough, sunny boards. “I told you! I told you all the time!” (102; my italics)

At this point, Faulkner immediately notes that we are reading Temple’s thoughts and perceptions about the transpiring events, and so we notice Temple’s nightmarish perception of what is happening. To Temple, sound and silence have been inverted: those sounds which she would

³⁶ I say “suggestively gruesome” since Faulkner deliberately and carefully withholds obscene details, though various specifics about the rape are revealed throughout the novel as Temple remembers and relives the assault.

expect to hear (like the shooting of a gun, the shutting of a door, and the footsteps of someone else) are imperceptible, while the silence (the motionless air and space between herself and Popeye) is terrifyingly audible. This synesthetic inversion indicates not only the surreally nightmarish quality of this scene but also that Temple is in such a state of fear and panic that her sensory perception has essentially been disengaged. As Popeye advances toward Temple, she begins to suffer the obliteration of her universe and metaphysical boundaries. Additionally, the impetuous, frivolous, and vivacious *débutante* to whom we were introduced earlier in the novel as constantly moving and dancing, as swirling, glittering, and vanishing, and as predatory is now characterized as motionless and limp, her hands “plam-up,” suggesting surrender, defenselessness, and fatality. For the rest of the novel, Faulkner generally describes Temple as being limp, inert, and useless, as if she now embodies her victimizer’s flaccid penis. Finally, we notice an insistence on Temple’s existential negation. She screams, “Something is going to happen to me. . . . ‘Something is happening to me!’ . . . ‘I told you it was!’”; however, since sound and silence have been transposed, her screams are mere nothingness. Faulkner even writes that the intended noise of her screaming “void[s] [her] words like hot silent bubbles into the bright silence about them.” Thus, the “silence” of her screaming negates her distress and call for help to a silent and uncaring world. Temple searches for sanctuary and soundness, but merely receives silence, nothingness, and sexual abuse. Later in the novel, Temple will continually refer to the “shucks” and the horrifyingly uproarious sounds they make. When she remembers the shucks and the corncob with which Popeye violated her, she infuses sound back into this scene, into her memory of this nightmare. By doing such, she rectifies and reorders this scene’s sensory erasure, reestablishing her reality but only according to the rape, to the negation and sterilization of her identity.

Nevertheless, Temple's transformation (the sterilization of her identity) does not end after the rape. In fact, we eventually witness Temple voice her desire to become a man, consequently obliterating the feminine with the masculine order that has taken over her life. This desire to become a man ultimately stems from the memory of her rape, and her attempt to negate her femininity becomes an attempt to control her past. At first, Temple's initial identity is eradicated and replaced with a mentality and physicality akin to Popeye's, especially his flaccid penis: she is corporeally limp and lifeless, and later she becomes incredibly sexual, borderline salacious and sadistic. However, Temple eventually comes to regard Popeye as a coward, as less than a "real man," and so, she desires to become such a "real man," strong and dominant, as someone who can control and please a woman, of which Popeye is no longer capable. During a sexual interaction with Popeye, during which Temple continually voices her frustration with Popeye's inability to gain an erection and please her, she begins to imagine herself as a man who could not only sexually please herself but who could also intimidate Popeye:

Then he was standing over and she was saying *Come on. Touch me. Touch me! You're a coward if you don't. Coward! Coward!*

" . . . Then it touched me, that nasty little cold hand, fiddling around inside the coat where I was naked. It was like alive ice and my skin started jumping away from it like those little flying fish in front of a boat. It was like my skin knew which way it was going to go before it started moving, and my skin would keep on jerking just ahead of it like there wouldn't be anything there when the hand got there.

"Then it got down to where my insides begin . . . and my insides started bubbling and going on *and the shucks began to make so much noise it was like laughing*. I'd think they were laughing at me because all the time his hand was going inside the top of my knickers and *I hadn't changed into a boy yet*.

" . . . But I kept on saying Coward! Coward! Touch me, coward! *I got mad, because he was so long doing it. I'd talk to him, I'd say Do you think I'm going to lie here all night, just waiting on you?* I'd say. Let me tell you what I'll do, I'd say. And I'd lie there with shucks laughing at me and me jerking away in front of his hand and I'd think what I'd say to him. *I'd talk to him like the teacher does in school, and then I was a teacher in school* and it [Popeye] was a little black thing like a nigger boy . . . I had iron-gray hair and spectacles and I was all big up here like women get. . . . And I was telling it what I'd do, and *it [Popeye's penis] kind of drawing up and drawing up* like it could already see the switch.

“Then I said that wont do. I ought to be a man. So I was an old man, with a long white beard, and then the little black man got littler and littler and I was saying Now. You see now. I’m a man now. Then I thought about being a man, and as soon as I thought it, it happened. It [Popeye’s penis] made a kind of plopping sound, like blowing a little rubber tube wrongside outward. It felt cold, like the inside of your mouth when you hold it open. I could feel it, and I lay right still to keep from laughing about how surprised he was going to be. (218-220; my italics)

In this confusing passage, we obviously notice that Temple has assumed the place of the victimizer, though she still recalls the time when Popeye victimized her with the “laughing” shucks. Temple then notices the icy lifelessness of Popeye’s hand (penis), its glacial touch apparently revolting to her skin. Temple then remarks that when Popeye’s hand reaches her groin, “there wouldn’t be anything there.” This remark suggests that Temple has not yet transformed herself into a man, though she indeed indicates her desire for her clitoris to be a penis. Also, this statement aligns the feminine genitalia with negation (castration), the feminine with a sense of nothingness, a notion wholly anathema to the notion of the feminine that Temple originally represented but which still illuminates her transformed perception of her femininity and feminine body. When Popeye attempts to penetrate Temple, either with his cold fingers or with his flaccid penis, Temple remembers the rape and the shucks, knowing all the while that if she were a man and, thus, without female genitalia, Popeye could not have raped her. Consequently, because Popeye is able to either masturbate or penetrate Temple, she immediately realizes that she still possess a feminine body and, hence, has not “changed into a boy yet.” Not only has Faulkner completely estranged Temple from her previous identity but also he associates her gender, sex, and sexuality with nothingness and negation, as the reasons why she currently feels hopeless and insignificant. Desperate to end her trauma, by attempting psychologically to transform her clitoris into a phallus, Temple literally tries to fill her void and add meaning back

into her life. Yet, such a transformation would be impossible so long as Popeye fills the role of the masculine and attempts to penetrate Temple's insides.

Inevitably, to revise the gender and sexual roles, Temple continues to deride Popeye, explicitly voicing her annoyance with his impotence: "Do you think I'm going to lie here all night, just waiting on you?" Temple then shifts to a scene where she is a mature, female teacher and Popeye, her obedient, reprovable student. Temple, yet again, comments on Popeye's flaccidity, noting that his penis is "drawing up and drawing up," or shrinking at the sight of the teacher's switch, or wooden stick to be used punitively against the reproachable student. Finally, Temple then realizes that this teacher-student image is not satisfactory, for she would still be a woman. Temple then imagines herself as a man who successfully intimidates Popeye, thus, transposing herself into the masculine role and Popeye into the feminine. Temple declares that she is now a man, and as such actually performs a kind of psychosomatic sex change, imagining Popeye's penis reconstructed into a clitoris ("like blowing a little rubber tube wrongside outward"). Additionally, when she states that she "thought about being a man, and as soon as [she] thought it, *it* happened. It made a kind of plopping sound," the first "it" refers to her own penis and subliminal sex change while the second and third "it" refer to Popeye's penis being transformed into a clitoris, noting that his penis felt like the inside of an open mouth, obviously summoning a metaphor for the labia and vaginal walls. Successfully imagining Popeye's and her own sex/gender reassignment surgeries, Temple then relishes in the image of Popeye placing his hand on her groin, shocked and angered by the fact that he has found male organs instead of feminine genitalia—this image, for Temple, being the ultimate retributive act and transposition of the sex and gender roles. Nonetheless, as she falls asleep waiting for Popeye to climax, Temple's fantasy soon vanishes, eradicated by a nightmarish recollection of the shucks.

Therefore, Faulkner successfully illustrates the sterilization of the feminine by silencing and subduing the feminine as well as transmogrifying the feminine sex into the masculine as Temple desires to change her past. Popeye's castration-anxiety/emasculation and sexual violation of Temple as a means of reestablishing his masculine dominance are both essentially what incite Temple's transformation and the sterilization of her identity. Unfortunately, since Temple cannot actually give herself a phallus, she must remain a woman anatomically and, therefore, must constantly remember the horrors of her past.

Thus far, I have spoken of a gender difference between masculine time and feminine time, but the previous excerpt raises the question of how sexuality and sexual difference alter temporality. Again, the difference rests between a linear, teleological time and a circular and regenerative time. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Irigaray speaks of the fecundity of the feminine sexual experience and orgasm, noting its regenerative nature and continual newness:

. . . she moves in harmony with the fecundity of nature. . . . Intimately tied to universal circulation and vibration that go beyond any enclosure within reproduction. Turing in a cycle that never resolves back to sameness. More passive than any voluntary passivity, yet not foreign to the act of creating/procreating the world. Within her something takes place, between earth and sky, in which she participates as in a continual gestation, a mystery to be deciphered. (195)

If Faulkner limned the descriptions of Temple and her temporal experiences according to his original description, Irigaray's postulation would seem a perfect match. The original Temple transcended time, danced across space and musical vibrations, swirled and twirled in infinite spirals of phantasmatic euphoria, and was truly a mystery to be deciphered. However, the new Temple who desires to be a man no longer experiences time and space as she did once before. Instead, she wishes to eradicate her feminine identity, and as we observed in the latter excerpt from the novel, she wishes to negate and transform her feminine sexuality into a masculine one. We also notice in the previous excerpt from *Sanctuary* that Temple's thoughts now follow the

“and . . . and . . . and then” syntactic structure of masculine linearity and chronological addition, further indicating how the masculine order has supplanted her femininity. Moreover, this excerpt from Irigaray also proposes a distinctly feminine sexual experience with a distinctly feminine temporal experience. Irigaray’s insistence on the memory and regeneration of the feminine sexual experience and orgasm indicates that each orgasm is singularly different yet interconnected as the interval between orgasms is diminished by a mnemonic tactility and cyclical nature, and so no single orgasm constitutes a complete consummation or ending. The masculine experience of sex, then, is defined relatively by an up-and-down, in-and-out motion that seeks a terminal, isolated orgasm as the linear project and conclusion. As such, masculine sexuality comes to represent sameness, each act of masturbation or fornication directed at the same desire, at reaching the same goal. In *Sanctuary*, Faulkner notably depicts the temporality of masculine sexuality via the velocity of cars bolting down straight roads and through tunnels. As Popeye abducts and drives Temple to Memphis directly after raping her, Faulkner writes:

Popeye drove swiftly but without any quality of haste or of flight, down the clay road and into the sand. Temple was beside him. . . . *she swayed limply to the lurching of the car. She lurched against Popeye, lifting her hand in limp reflex.* Without releasing the wheel he thrust her back with his elbow. “*Brace yourself,*” he said. “*Come one, now.*” . . .

When they reached the tree Popeye swung the car out of the road and drove it crashing into the undergrowth and through the prone tree-top and back into the road again in a running popping of cane-stalk like musketry along a trench, *without any diminution of speed.* . . .

Popeye swung back into the sandy ruts. Yet there was no flight in the action; He performed it with a certain vicious petulance, that was all. *It was a powerful car.*” (*Sanctuary* 136-7; my italics)

In addition, later, writing about a series of delusions that cause Horace Benbow to vomit in terror and disgust, Faulkner writes:

Lying with her [Horace’s] head lifted slightly, her chin depressed like a figure lifted down from a crucifix, she watched *something black and furious go roaring out of her pale body. She was bound naked on her back on a flat car moving at speed through a*

black tunnel, the blackness streaming in rigid threads overhead, a roar of iron wheels in her ears. The car shot bodily from the tunnel in a long upward slant, the darkness overhead now shredded with parallel attenuations of living fire, toward a crescendo like a held breath, an interval in which she would swing faintly and lazily in nothingness filled with pale, myriad points of light. (233; my italics)

In both passages, Faulkner substitutes the phallus with the car as the object of sexual penetration. For Popeye, the substitution takes place, like with the corn cob, because of his impotence. For Horace, the substitution takes place because in his delusion he imagines himself a woman, essentially transmogrifying himself into Temple's position during her rape and during her car ride with Popeye to Memphis, and thus, regenerating the explicit nature of this automotive rapidity. In the first excerpt, Popeye drives his car back and forth between the road and the sand and shrubbery that would seemingly line the highway—this back-and-forth motion of the car is indicative of the back-and-forth penetration of the phallus. Eventually, the car makes its final move by driving back into the sand, the consummation of Popeye's aggressive driving and of the implicit sex act. Shortly following this passage, Temple remarks that she is "still bleeding," which insinuates this scene's sexual brutality (137). In the second excerpt, the carnality is much more explicit with images of the car shooting "bodily" in and out of a dark tunnel, eventually reaching a "crescendo," an orgasm. Accordingly, both excerpts show the masculine sexual experience as a project of departure and arrival, focused on that conclusion and goal of a discrete, discontinuous climax.

And Temple desires this discontinuous, disconnected climax since to have this masculine sexual experience would mean not only that she is no longer a woman and therefore can negate her past but also upon intercourse she would then not be reminded of her past, the masculine experience focused on the teleological end rather than a regenerative, monumental experience. As Popeye touches Temple and begins to penetrate her, she cannot help remembering and

reliving her rape. The shucks always return since she cannot successfully negate her biological sex and genitalia. Temple desperately desires a sexual experience and orgasm wholly disconnected from her past, both metaphysically and sexually—an experience like that of a speeding car constantly distancing itself further from the past—because she can no longer bear her feminine existence and the memory triggered by her female anatomy. Accordingly, Faulkner initially presents a feminine sexuality and temporality as an experience and pleasure that, as Irigaray elucidates, “moves in harmony with the fecundity of nature,” is a “transcendence of life. Still in the future, always being reborn . . . a new morning, a new spring, a new dawn,” but later transforms this cosmic, sublime experience into a living hell (Irigaray 195; 197). And it is the overbearing, castration-fearing masculine that turns Temple’s life into this nightmare, silencing not only her voice, as Cixous would claim, in retaliation for her threatening, emasculating tongue but also her being, her desire and ability to exist in a cosmos of harmonious regeneration, incorporeality, atemporality, and infinity where she is unrestricted by the projects and *telos* of masculine time. For Temple, although she tries to abate her nightmare, ultimately, her futureless future has been sealed, and at the novel’s close, free from Popeye’s cold, evil grip and with her father in Paris, Faulkner illustrates that her transformation has reached completion as he describes her in a scene and state entirely antithetical to his original introduction of her character:

It had been a *gray* day, a *gray* summer, a *gray* year. . . . in the Luxembourg Gardens as Temple and her father passed the women sat knitting shawls and even the men playing croquet played in coats and capes, and in the sad gloom of the chestnut trees the dry click of balls, the random shouts of children, had that quality of autumn, gallant and evanescent and forlorn. From beyond the circle with its *spurious* Greek balustrade, clotted with movement, filled with *gray light* of the same color and texture as the water which the fountain played into the pool, came a steady crash of music. . . .

In the pavilion a band in the horizon blue of the army played Massenet and Scriabin, and Berlioz like a thin coating of tortured Tchaikovsky [sic] on a slice of stale bread while the twilight dissolved in wet gleams from the branches, onto the pavilion and the sombre toadstools and umbrellas. Rich and resonant *the brasses crashed and died* in the *thick green twilight*, rolling over them in rich sad waves. Temple yawned behind her

hand, then she took out a compact and opened it upon a face *in miniature sullen and discontented and sad*. . . . She closed the compact and from beneath her smart new hat *she seemed to follow with her eyes the waves of music*, to dissolve into the *dying* brasses, across the pool and the opposite semicircle of trees where at sombre intervals the *dead* tranquil queens in stained marble mused, and on into the sky *lying prone and vanquished in the embrace of the season of rain and death*. (317; my italics)

In this final scene, Temple and her father are in the Luxembourg Gardens around twilight. Immediately, we notice the stark contrasts between the setting, tone, and Temple's disposition. The lush, Parisian beauty is paradoxically inundated with artificiality and unreality, deterioration and death³⁷: the day and light are gray, the twilight is green and dissolving, the Greek balustrade is "spurious," the "sad gloom" of the chestnut trees is "evanescent and forlorn," the band is "torturing" a Tchaikovskian composition which the narrator relates to "stale bread," the brass instruments "crashed and died," the marble statues are dead, the band's music is dissolving, the sky is "prone and vanquished," and the "season of rain and death" is approaching. This scene carries an air of lifelessness and staleness, an already-belonging-to-the-past moribundity wherein everything seems unreal and abiotic, irrecoverable and unsustainable. All that remains in the present is an irreparable wasteland of the past. And Temple, the young lady in constant motion, waywardly and effervescently dancing between various, insignificant "collegiate arms" while "her feet [filled] the rhythmic gap with music," is now motionless, seemingly catatonic as her eyes merely follow the dissolving waves of music into the dissolving twilight sky.

By the novel's end, even though Faulkner has restored, more or less, the good-evil dichotomy—the "good and innocent" have been "saved," the evil "vanquished," et cetera—resolution is impossible, or just implausible given the absurd existential decay that practically

³⁷ During his sojourn in Paris in the mid-1920s, Faulkner's letters to his mother constantly expressed his love of the Luxembourg Gardens. Oddly enough though illuminating with regards to how we might understand this final scene, Faulkner writes in one letter dated September 6, 1925, "I have just written such a beautiful thing that I am about to bust—2000 words about the Luxembourg gardens and death. It has a thin plot about a woman, and it is poetry though written in prose form. I have worked on it for two whole days and every word is perfect" (*Selected Letters of William Faulkner* 17)

every character has suffered. Nor would Faulkner dream of ending Temple's nightmare. In this final scene, we vaguely notice more sensory distortion, exacerbating this scene's disorder and surreality. For the last time in this novel, Temple takes out her compact and gazes at herself in the small mirror, her face reduced to a miniature size. Unless the mirror in Temple's compact is convex³⁸, which would seem unlikely, her reflection should be a virtual image of the same size and proportions. Still, Faulkner writes that the mirror reduces minimizes her image—the mirror no longer functions to reflect her superficial reality but rather her existential degradation. Perhaps what seems most poignant about this ending is not merely the pervasive deterioration and death nor the fact that Temple is “sullen and discontented and sad” but more importantly the notion that Temple has surrendered herself to fortuity, resigned herself to continue living. With a nightmarish past and bleak future, Temple does not *choose* life over death with a platitudinous “it gets better” mentality; instead, she vulnerably and powerlessly accepts defeat in the face of life, her punishment and doom being more life without sanctuary.

Janine

Whereas Faulkner presents an ingenuous, vivacious young woman eventually corrupted by an evil, castration-fearing, retributive masculine economy, Camus introduces Janine, and middle-aged and diffident, in a state similar to how we find Temple at the end of Faulkner's novel. Like Temple during the final scene of *Sanctuary*, in “La Femme Adultère” we find Janine dejected, hopeless, and without a future, metaphysically and existentially imprisoned within a world she did not create and from which she cannot escape. The story begins with the image of a fly buzzing around a bus. Camus then quickly introduces Janine, who is watching this fly.

³⁸ The convex mirror would, virtually, present a distortedly smaller image, though it is unlikely that the presumably simple mirror in her compact would be anything but a plane-mirror.

Though this story's narration is heterodiegetic, we quickly see that the narration is heavily focalized on Janine's thoughts and experience. And even before we are given any context about Janine and Marcel or their present situation, we can already notice that Janine feels trapped and listless:

Une mouche maigre tournait, depuis un moment, dans l'autocar aux glaces pourtant relevées. Insolite, elle allait et venait *sans bruit*, d'un vol exténué. Janine la perdit de vue, puis la vit atterrir sur la main immobile de son mari. Il faisait froid. La mouche frissonnait à chaque *rafale du vent sableux qui crissait contre les vitres*. Dans la lumière rare du matin d'hiver, à grand bruit de tôles et d'essieux, le véhicule roulait, tanguait, avançait à peine. . . .

L'autocar était plein d'Arabes qui faisaient mine de dormir, enfouis dans leur burnous. Quelques-uns avaient ramené leurs pieds sur la banquette et oscillaient plus que les autres dans le mouvement de la voiture. *Leur silence, leur impassibilité finissaient par peser à Janine; il lui semblait qu'elle voyageait depuis des jours avec cette escorte muette*. Pourtant, le car était parti à l'aube, du terminus de la voie ferrée, et, depuis deux heures, dans le matin froid, *il progressait sur un plateau pierreux, désolé, qui, au départ du moins, étendait ses lignes droites jusqu'à des horizons rougeâtres*.³⁹ (11-12; my italics)

On this bus, the only life form that seems to have any life, volition, or kinetics is the fly, whereas all the passengers are motionless, their bodies swaying only according to the bus's motion, which Janine equally perceives as essentially motionless. The desert is cold, the wind sandy, and the climate and landscape are oppressively dry and sterile. We notice Janine's frustration with her marriage and husband, the "mute escort." Janine also finds superincumbent the silence and expressionlessness of the formless, enshrouded passengers. As was the case with Temple in the barn, the nothingness of silence is more insufferable and tortuous than strident clamor. Most

³⁹ "A meager fly was circling, for a moment, in the bus though the windows were closed. Strange, it was going and coming *without noise*, on an exhausted flight. Janine lost sight of it, then saw it land on her husband's immobile hand. It was cold. The fly was shuddering to each *gust of sandy wind scratching against the windows*. In the unusual light of the winter morning, to the loud noise of sheet metal and axles, the vehicle was rolling, stumbling, barely advancing. . . . The bus was full of Arabs who were pretending to sleep, enshrouded in their burnouses. Several had brought their feet to their seats and swayed more than the others to the movement of the bus. *The silence, their impassivity was beginning to weigh on Janine; it seemed that she had been traveling for several hours with this mute escort*. However, the car had left at dawn, from the terminus of the steel tracks, and, for two hours, in the cold morning, *it was progressing on a stony plateau, desolate, which, during the departure at least, extended its straight lines all the way to the reddish horizon*."

importantly, the seeming motionlessness of the bus and the abject silence have severely augmented and swollen Janine's perception of time: what has merely been two hours, for Janine, has felt like several days. Thus, we begin to understand Janine's desire for escape. We also know that Janine is a *pied noir* in "exile" in Algeria, and there is an obvious distinction between herself and the burnouse-wearing Arab passengers. Janine is not literally in exile; however, one of the prevalent themes of *L'Exil et le Royaume* is the notion, feeling, and problem of otherness and foreignness and the existential dilemmas that arise from feeling as though one were in exile, simultaneously disconnected and estranged from one's motherland as well as from one's present residence and social environment. The indigenous Algerian population still feels foreign to Janine, as she often perceives them as merely hooded, amorphous figures ("les formes drapées") (16). The perceptible racism of such a description on Camus's part notwithstanding, Janine considers Algeria an impenetrable and unfathomable country—the weather preventing expedient travel, the veiled Arabs preventing corporeal identification and association, but, rather, spurring a clear and menacing otherness, disidentification and disassociation. However, Algeria, its people, culture, and language are not the only reason why Janine has fallen into such diffidence, discontentment, and consternation; in fact, Algeria's foreignness to Janine seems merely tangential to her current state, whereas Marcel and her marriage seem paramount.

In fact, her husband and marriage are what keep Janine disconnected from the Algerian country and culture. Because of Marcel, consequently, Janine's life and certainly her time come to embody Marcel's life and time—that masculine time and teleology of business, economics, and money. We soon learn that this trip is a matter of Marcel's business, and Janine, being her husband's employee and wife made biddable after years of romantic dissatisfaction, loneliness, and an apparent identity crisis, has reluctantly joined him on this capital venture. And what

better picture to represent this masculine teleology and linearity, this illusion of cause-and-effect economic progress than the image of a bus slowing driving along a seemingly endless, straight road which is supposed to lead Marcel and his wife towards commerce and prosperity? Of course, Marcel, whose only passion is money and business, subjects Janine to this time and life while his mind is selfishly focused on when the bus will arrive at their destination rather than on his wife's transparent discomfort. And at least as far as the narrative structure and voice reveal, Janine is the only one who suffers this excruciatingly arduous bus ride and marriage, whereas Marcel is senselessly focused on his own time and future:

Quand Marcel avait voulu l'emmener avec lui dans sa tournée, elle avait protesté. Il pensait depuis longtemps à ce voyage, depuis la fin de la guerre exactement, au moment où les affaires étaient redevenues normales. Avant la guerre, le petit commerce de tissus qu'il avait repris de ses parents . . . les faisait vivre plutôt bien que mal. Sur la côte, les années de jeunesse peuvent être heureuse. Mais il n'aimait pas beaucoup l'effort physique et, très vite, il avait cessé de la mener sur les plages. . . . Ils n'avaient pas eu d'enfants. Les années avaient passé, dans la pénombre qu'ils entretenaient, volets mi-clos. . . . Rien ne semblait intéresser Marcel que ses affaires. Elle avait cru découvrir sa vraie passion, qui était l'argent, et elle n'aimait pas cela, sans trop savoir pourquoi.⁴⁰ (14-5)

Marcel's and, hence, Janine's time is not only the linear time of business but also the linear time of inheritance and genealogy, Marcel's shop and trade bequeathed to him by his parents. Interestingly enough, however, Marcel and Janine do not have children, and so their time has yet to subsume that time of reproductive futurism and posterity. Whether Janine desires children or not, she seems equally reluctant to leave Marcel as she is frustrated with his brazen disregard for her desires. Evidently contiguous with her identity crisis, Janine clings to Marcel as she suffers from an existential *angoisse* of living and dying alone: "Surtout, elle aimait être aimée, et il

⁴⁰ When Marcel had wanted to bring her along on his trip, she had protested. He had been thinking of this trip for a longtime, since the end of the war precisely, when business had returned to normal. Before the war, the little dry goods shop that he had acquired from his parents . . . had allowed them to live rather well. On the coast, the years of youth can be happy. But he did not like much physical effort, and very quickly, he had stopped bringing her to the beaches. . . . They didn't have any children. The years had passed in semi-darkness behind half-closed shutters. . . . Nothing seems to interest Marcel besides business. She thought she had discovered his true passion, which was money, and she did not like that, without knowing why."

l'avait submergé d'assiduités. A lui faire sentir si souvent qu'elle existait pour lui, il la faisait exister réellement. Non, elle n'était pas seule . . ."⁴¹ (13). Janine, desirous of that common prospect and almost essential need for romantic interpersonal and mutuality, validates her relationship as not only attributing meaning to her existence but also allocating an existence for herself, as if she did not exist before nor would exist later without Marcel or a husband. Still, Janine anguishes equally over her past life, particularly her years as a gymnast and her once youthfully slender body and ingenuous confidence. Upon reaching their hotel and in their suite alone, Janine takes a nap, "[rêvant] aux palmiers droits et flexibles, et à la jeune fille qu'elle avait été"⁴² (20). Camus illustrates Janine with a melancholic complexity: her life with Marcel, or at least his presence and status as *his* wife, provides her with some existential meaning and fulfillment, yet she dreams and yearns for her past life and youth. Therefore, Janine appears trapped from practically every angle: trapped on a bus, trapped in a country that seems wholly alien to her, trapped in a marriage, trapped within her age and body, trapped within time and space. But, despite these metaphysical and existential entrapments, Janine still tries to escape, to liberate herself from Marcel and his masculine shackles, and to reconnect with her subdued feminine quiddity and time.

Whereas most of the novel depicts the time according to Marcel's desires and ventures, as we approach this short story's end, we finally see a feminine time and experience begin to emerge, similar, in fact, to Irigaray's linking of feminine time and sexuality with the cosmos. We also mark a shift in Camus syntactic style, changing from a slow, monotonously and sequentially organized style that highlights the tedium of the bus ride to a highly descriptive style with longwinded yet poetic and elegiac sentences emphatic of Janine's visceral exudations and

⁴¹ "Most of all, she liked being loved, and he had flooded her with assiduities. By so often making herself feel that she existed for him, he had her exist in reality. No, she was not alone . . ."

⁴² "[dreaming] of the erect and flexible palm trees, and of the young girl she once had been"

jouissance as she begins to find escape and liberation in the desert terrain and celestial firmament. Because these final scenes of Janine's frenzied ecstasy are suggestively sexual, I will first discuss the sexuality of Janine and Marcel's marriage, particularly the notion that Marcel is impotent or infertile, implicit in the various phallic imagery, which seems either to function by metonymically replacing Marcel's penis with an abiotic, ersatz stand-in or by kindling Janine's sexual frustration. I will also note beforehand that Simon P. Sibelman has already conducted a study on this story's phallic imagery in his essay "The Anguish and the Ecstasy," which arguably exhausts all possible phallic imagery (some by virtue of Sibelman's own fancy) that could be extracted from this text. Sibelman's essay, though persuasive and compelling, only considers the phallic imagery as indicative of Janine's sexual frustrations and existential crisis, a realization of both her husband's romantic and carnal ineptitude and her own life's meaninglessness, which ultimately engenders Janine's moment of epiphanic jouissance in the desert. Sibelman's essay, however, does not elaborate on how the phallic imagery comes to represent Marcel's impotence, castration anxiety, and emasculation as a result of Janine's titular, and possibly extradiegetic, "adultery." Sibelman's essay equally would have us believe that Janine's entangled existence and sexual dissatisfaction is merely a matter of unavoidable, existential fortuity, a matter solely immanent and internal. Without declaring unreservedly that Janine is by no means responsible for her present circumstance, I will focus on how Marcel and the conventions of marriage have dehumanized Janine, forcing her into this role as diffident, biddable, dependent wife. Emasculated, Marcel assiduously, but not tenderly or romantically, keeps watch of Janine, controlling and silencing her in retaliation to his emasculation. Finally, whereas Sibelman refers to the phallic imagery as intrinsically replacing the penis and penetration (literally, in Sibelman's argument, the phallus-*cum*-penis penetrates and pleases Janine), I consider the phallic imagery as

mere mimesis and metonymy that suggests phallicism only in shape and superficial appearance, not in function or potency. Thus, I contend that the phallic imagery does not function to penetrate and satisfy Janine, arousing her psychosomatic climax and *jouissance*, nor does it necessarily represent some lustful, extramarital desires; instead, the imagery highlights her frustrations and dissatisfactions with a hetero-masculine-controlled sex. And at the story's end, the phalluses are not the source of Janine's pleasure; instead, her *jouissance* is induced by a spiritually autoerotic connection with the cosmos and the earth as she tries to rid herself of the masculine, though, unfortunately, to no enduring avail.

The first phallic image in this story is also perhaps the most telling: on the bus, Marcel sits “[serrant] si fortement une petite valise de toile, placée entre ses genoux”⁴³ (11). Sibelman and Vicki Mistacco have already noted the metonymically phallic nature of this image as well as the transference of potency from phallus to valise, or suitcase. Also referred to as a *malle*—phonetically equivalent to *mâle* and, therefore, redolent of the masculine sex—the suitcase, therefore, represents Marcel's capitalistic prospects and career as well as his masculine virility. Marcel carries his manhood in his suitcase and business, whereas his sexual virility, at least through Janine's eyes, is virtually nonexistent, displaced by his love for money (Sibelman 44; 46). And from a quote previously cited, the fact that Marcel's love and attention has so unappeasably shifted from his wife to commerce deeply disturbs Janine. Since this story begins *in medias res*, we question why this shift has occurred in Marcel, why he no longer cares for romance and intercourse with his wife. If we begin to consider the title, we surmise the possibility that Janine has committed prediegetic adultery, provoking Marcel's romantic and sexual vacancy; though, he still holds onto Janine, keeping close watch of her, drowning her in assiduities and insisting that she join him on this trip.

⁴³ “[gripping] so powerfully to a tiny suitcase placed between his knees”

And though Marcel holds his masculinity in the *junk* of his business, we still see that Camus has and continues to corporeally de-masculinize Marcel throughout this story, yet again, using phallic images to suggest castration and emasculation. While Sibelman has noted disadvantageously that Marcel has an “effeminate” physique and visage, more conducive to such an argument is Marcel’s sense of inferiority towards other men with a perceptibly masculine air and arrogance:

De l’autre extrémité de la place venait un grand Arabe, maigre, vigoureux, couvert d’un burnous bleu ciel, chaussé de souples bottes jaunes, les mains gantées, et qui portait haut un visage aquilin et bronzé. . . . I avançait régulièrement dans leur direction, mais semblait regarder au-delà de leur groupe, en dégageant avec lenteur l’une de ses mains. "Eh bien, dit Marcel en haussant les épaules, en voilà un qui se croit général." . . . Alors que l’espace vide de la place les entourait, *il avançait droit sur la malle, sans la voir, sans les voir*. Puis la distance qui les séparait diminuait rapidement et l’Arabe arrivait sur eux, lorsque Marcel saisit, tout d’un coup, la poignée de la cantine, et *la tira en arrière*. L’autre passa, sans paraître rien remarquer, et se dirigea du même pas vers les remparts. . . . "Ils se croient tout permis, maintenant," dit-il.⁴⁴ (24; my italics)

Though Sibelman does not thoroughly analyze this scene, for his study is focused on Janine and not Marcel, Sibelman does expatiate that this cloaked and visually-striking Arab man is another phallic symbol—not only does this man seem to epitomize conventional virility but also his burnouse-draped figure is suggestively phallic via his silhouette (Sibelman 49). Of course, if we are to believe this argument, we must also assume that all *formes drapées* are incidentally phallic, though this claim is not implausible, for Camus often eroticizes the “exotic” and “strange” Algerian populace as seen through the eyes of his pied noir protagonists. In this scene, the phallicism of the Arab man is not only suggestively erotic and virile but also hostile to

⁴⁴ “From the other side of the square came a tall Arab man, thin, vigorous, covered in a sky-blue burnouse, wearing supple yellow boots and gloves, and holding loftily his aquiline, bronzed face. . . . He was advancing steadily in their direction but seemed to be looking past their group while slowly removing a glove from one of his hands. “Well,” said Marcel, shrugging his shoulders, “there’s one who thinks he’s a general.” . . . While the empty space of the square surrounded the three of them, *the Arab advanced straight toward Marcel’s trunk, without seeing it*, without seeing them. Then the distance that separated them diminished rapidly, and the Arab reached them when Marcel suddenly grabbed the trunk’s handle and *pulled it back*. The other passed by, without appearing to notice anything, and headed for the ramparts with the same steps. “They think that they can do anything now,” Marcel said.”

Marcel, whose *malle-cum-penis* is clearly inferior, the Arab completely disregarding its existence and machismo. The association of the *malle* with Marcel's manhood is grammatically ironic, for it suggests not simply a displacement of virility from biotic organ to abiotic object but also a "feminization," *la malle* obviously being a feminine noun⁴⁵. And so, when Camus writes that the Arab "avançait droit sur *la malle*, sans *la voir*" and when Marcel "*la tira en arrière*," Marcel's "manhood" goes from object-noun (*la malle*) to a purely feminine article (*la*)⁴⁶ as the Arab man asserts his apparent arrogance and masculine superiority. The "en arrière" is also suggestive of Marcel's castration and emasculation, or merely de-masculinization, for he must metonymically pull backwards his trunk/penis so that the Arab man does not knock it over/trample on it. Following this logic, Marcel's de-masculinization follows from penis to *la malle* to *la*, the first displacement suggesting impotence, and the second displacement suggesting castration—the *malle* has been removed and all that is left is a *la*.

This explanation of Marcel's de-masculinization relative to his marriage would differ slightly from a Cixousian analysis drawn from "Castration or Decapitation?" since Janine is not the direct reason why Marcel is immediately emasculated in this scene, but, rather, the Arab man seems the castrator. We should also consider that this scene occurs directly after a failed business venture—the contents of his *malle/mâle* rejected consequently. Nevertheless, we must additionally note that Janine is the "adulterous" and "wanton" wife that must not be trusted, and it is Janine's "adulterous" gaze and sexual frustration that spots and brings Marcel's attention to

⁴⁵ I use "feminization" only in the grammatical sense, for I do not intend that Marcel acquires feminine characteristics. Marcel's castration/emasculation/de-masculinization does not mean that he *becomes* the feminine or is *feminized*, for the masculine and the feminine do not constitute a diametric opposition or negation wherein one can merely interchange sexes by negating the one, particularly, by deeming the voided masculine genitalia as a "feminization" or "effeminate" characteristic. However, I do consider the association of Marcel's "manhood" with a femininely gendered noun as suggestive for his de-masculinization.

⁴⁶ the Arab "was advancing straight toward *the trunk*, with out seeing *it*"; Marcel "pulled *it* back." The English translation cannot show the effect of the gendered French noun (*la malle*). In French, the *la* represents both the gender-article of the trunk and the pronoun "it" used to replace the noun.

the statuesque Arab. Camus writes, “Ils s’arrêtèrent sur la place. Marcel se frottait les mains, il contemplait d’un air tender la malle, devant eux. “Regarde,” dit Janine,”⁴⁷ after which Janine directs Marcel’s eyes to the Arab man (23). Of course, Janine’s informing Marcel to *regarder* (look) at the Arab man is indicative of her own *regard* (gaze), bringing her jealous and progressively de-masculinized husband’s attention, which at the moment is focused on his ineffectual trunk (penis), to an image and scene that will only de-masculinize, if not castrate/emasculate, him further. Consequently, whether Janine’s intentions to bring Marcel’s eyes to the Arab man are innocuous or wanton is superfluous since we can ultimately tell that this scene is a product of Janine’s sexual discontentment as her eyes wander to other men. Janine, then, acts as the indirect castrator in this scene, and Marcel, aware that his wife’s wandering gaze is fixed on a redoubtably handsome and Arab man, responds with sarcastic criticism of the Arab’s haughty demeanor, a sign of both Marcel’s inferiority and a desperate attempt to fortify his now precarious sense of masculinity.

With Marcel’s de-masculinization in mind (and mind, as well, that this story is gravid with phallic imagery indicative of his castration/emasculatation), we begin to understand why Marcel so desperately, but non-sexually, tries to control and restrain Janine, for his marriage and, therefore, his dominance over his wife remains his final, conventionally masculine quality. Even still, Janine tries to escape and liberate herself from Marcel’s castration-anxious, masculine order and time. The first scene that suggests this newly active endeavor to escape and liberate arrives when Marcel and Janine first ascend a nearby fort that overlooks the *oasien* expanse of the desert in the early evening. Janine is able to convince a languid and recently downtrodden Marcel to climb the fort with her. As she climbs the fort’s steep steps, Janine can feel something growing

⁴⁷ “They stopped in the square. Marcel rubbed his hands; he contemplated the trunk before them with a tender look. ‘Look,’ said Janine.”

within her, the air vibrating and the silent expanse echoing all around her. This scene's synesthetic quality—the hearing and feeling of the silence—creates a fantasy for Janine rather than the nightmare-induce synesthesia that Temple experiences in *Sanctuary*. With Janine at the top of the fort and gazing across the vast oasis, Camus writes:

Janine, appuyée de tout son corps au parapet, restait sans voix, incapable de s'arracher au vide qui s'ouvrait devant elle. A ses côtes, Marcel s'agitait. Il avait froid, il voulait descendre. Qu'y avait-il donc à voir ici ? Mais elle ne pouvait détacher ses regards de l'horizon. Là-bas, plus au sud encore, à cet endroit où le ciel et la terre se rejoignaient dans une ligne pure, là-bas, lui semblait-il soudain, quelque chose l'attendait qu'elle avait ignoré jusqu'à ce jour et qui pourtant n'avait cessé de lui manquer. Dans l'après-midi qui avançait, la lumière se détendait doucement ; de cristalline, elle devenait liquide. En même temps, au cœur d'une femme que le hasard seul amenait là, un nœud que les années, l'habitude et l'ennui avaient serré, se dénouait lentement.⁴⁸ (26-7)

Atop the fort Janine finds herself caught in a moment during which she temporarily escapes from reality, encountering and embracing a landscape and a world that has always seemed so foreign and hostile. Later in the night, abandoning the sanctum of her marital bed, Janine will return to this same spot and will experience a jouissance completely unfamiliar to her being, consequently discovering a new sanctuary in the nocturnal desert oasis and celestial cosmos. In Sibelman's essay, he notes that the fort and parapet are phallic, introduce Janine to a world outside of her marriage and Marcel, and instigate her phantasmatic orgasm at the story's end (49-51). However, Sibelman's argument only works when considering Janine's phantasmatic sexual experience as intrinsically heterosexual in which a phallus must be present. To deem the fort and parapet as unequivocally phallic is rather fallacious since Camus gives no description of the fort

⁴⁸ "Janine, pressing all her body against the parapet, was still and speechless, incapable of tearing herself away from the void opening before her. At her side, Marcel was growing restless. He was cold; he wanted to go back down. What was there to see here anyway? But she could not detach her gaze from the horizon. Over there, even further south, at that place where sky and earth become one in a pure line; over there, it suddenly seemed there was something awaiting her, something before which she had never known until this day but which, however, had not ceased to be lacking. In the advancing afternoon, the light was gently relaxing; from crystalline, it became liquid. At the same time, in the heart of a woman who, by chance, was brought here alone, a knot, which over the years, from habit and ennui, had tightened, was slowly untangling."

that resolutely intends phallicism nor does Janine's phantasmatic intercourse transpire with the fort and parapet. Sibelman is just in noting that the fort introduces Janine to the vast expanse of the Algerian desert, but the fort is not conclusively phallic nor does it unreservedly indicate the masculine. Of course, the fort historically represents the masculine since wars and regimes are endeavors and constructions of a masculine order. Nonetheless, the fort has become a part of that mysterious and mystical landscape and become a means of bringing Janine to that transcendental place between earth and sky where she is no longer controlled by masculine time or Marcel's masculine order. Inevitably, Janine's spiritual connection and phantasmatic intercourse occurs with the landscape and the cosmos, not with an allegedly phallic fort and parapet.

And as Janine slowly feels herself finding liberation from her husband's world, she is immediately pulled back into the masculine order as Marcel, who becomes annoyed with Janine's imprudence and disregard for his own discomfort atop the fort, pulls his wife away from the parapet, away from her oasis, and avers, "'On crève,' dit Marcel, 'tu es stupide. Rentrons.'"⁴⁹ (28). Health and medical accuracy aside, Marcel's words clearly reassert and reestablish his masculine order: it was Janine's idea to go the fort, and Marcel, clearly uncomfortable and unaware or uncaring of his wife's moment of happiness, decides that Janine in acting foolishly, this ascent atop the fort has been a pointless endeavor, and, therefore, he must intervene to fix this illogical feminine order and reintroduce his overbearing masculinity. Subsequently, Camus writes of Janine, "Son exaltation l'avait quittée. . . . Qu'y ferait-elle désormais, sinon s'y traîner jusqu'au sommeil, jusqu'à la mort?"⁵⁰ (28). The masculine order has been reestablished not only because Marcel intervenes and pulls Janine back into this order,

⁴⁹ "'We're going to freeze to death,' said Marcel. 'You're being stupid. We're going back.'"

⁵⁰ "Her exaltation had left her. . . . What was there to do now, except to drag herself towards sleep, towards death?"

but also because Janine feels that she has just lost an irrecoverably singular experience. All that Janine can do now is drag herself to bed, ultimately towards death, and this notion specifically represents the intrusion of masculine time, a time without redemption or regeneration that leads us straight towards death. Whereas Janine's temporary withdrawal into fantasy stresses eternity, her eternal connection with this world and the eternal promise that this world is for and belongs to her, Marcel's disturbance reintroduces this masculine reality of finitude. And though Janine has been re-burdened by Marcel's masculine order, she will try once more to escape, to liberate herself and spiritually recover her oasis.

And thus, later that evening Janine leaves Marcel in bed and runs back to the desert oasis where she has a near-orgasmic experience as she reaches that place between earth and sky, exulting in her spatial and temporal *laissez-aller*. Atop the fort yet again, Janine's *jouissance* engrosses her and transports her to a place of pure, phantasmagoric, and carnal rapture. In this moment, we see a feminine time emerge, uniquely distinct from the masculine time that has controlled this story. However, in the end it appears that Janine is unable to sustain this experience and exultation, ultimately transient and ineffectual in the face of the existential degradation she has experienced over the years, trapped within the confines of a masculine order. In the end, defeated and dejected, Janine goes back to her marital bed and Marcel and declares that nothing has happened, that nothing is wrong, and, hence, declares the seemingly immutable negation and nothingness of her existence, the sterilization of her future.

In the desert once again, Janine feels "une sorte de giration pesante entraînait le ciel au-dessus d'elle,"⁵¹ the gyration being our first indication that Janine's experience is more than spiritual and additionally the circularity and regeneration indicating her absconding of masculine linearity. Janine continues to connect with the cosmos as Camus writes:

⁵¹ Janine feels "a sort of languid gyration moving the sky above her"

Dans les épaisseurs de la nuit sèche et froide, des milliers d'étoiles se formaient sans trêve et leurs glaçons étincelants, aussitôt détachés, commençaient de glisser insensiblement vers l'horizon. . . . Elle tournait avec eux et le même cheminement immobile la réunissait peu à peu à son être le plus profond, où le froid et le désir maintenant se combattaient. Devant elle, les étoiles tombaient, une à une, puis s'éteignaient parmi les pierres du désert, et à chaque fois Janine s'ouvrait un peu plus à la nuit. Elle respirait, elle oubliait le froid, le poids des être, la vie démente ou figée, la longue angoisse de vivre et de mourir. . . . En même temps, il lui semblait retrouver ses racines, la sève montait à nouveau dans son corps qui ne tremblait plus. Pressée de tout son ventre contre le parapet, tendue vers le ciel en mouvement, elle attendait seulement que son cœur encore bouleversé s'apaisât à son tour et que le silence se fit en elle. Les dernières étoiles des constellations laissèrent tomber leurs grappes un peu plus bas sur l'horizon du désert, et s'immobilisèrent. Alors, avec une douceur insupportable, l'eau de la nuit commença d'emplir Janine, submergea le froid, monta peu à peu de centre obscur de son être et déborda en flots ininterrompus jusqu'à sa bouche pleine de gémissements. L'instant d'après, le ciel entier s'étendait au-dessus d'elle, renversée sur la terre froide.⁵² (33-4)

Yet again, we can analyze this passage according to what Irigaray and Kristeva had to say about the relationship between feminine sexuality and time. Irigaray connects the feminine with the “universal circulation and vibration that goes beyond the enclosure within reproduction. Turning in a cycle that never resolves to sameness,” and like Janine’s *jouissance*, within the feminine “something takes place, between earth and sky, in which she participates in a continual gestation, a mystery to be deciphered.” In this scene, Janine perceives the sky as turning, and she turns with the sky, feeling the “water of the night” flowing through her in continuous waves. Janine “recovers her roots,” which indicates this notion that she was previously lacking something essential to her being. Camus also writes that in this moment she ceased to worry about the

⁵² “In the dark depths of the dry, cold night, thousands of stars were constantly forming, and their icicles glittering, immediately detached, began to slip little by little toward the horizon. . . . She was turning with them, and the same motionless progress united her little by little with the profundity of her being where cold and desire were competing with each other. Before her, the stars were falling, one by one, then faded among the desert stones, and each time Janine opened up more and more to the night. She was breathing deeply, forgetting the cold, the oppressive weight of others, the insanity and immobility of life, the long anguish of living and dying. . . . At the same time, she seemed to recover her roots, the sap rising anew in her body. Pressing all her stomach against the parapet, stretched toward the moving sky, she was waiting for her overwhelmed heart to calm down and find silence within her. The last stars of the constellations let fall their clusters a little lower on the desert horizon and immobilize. Then, with an unbearable softness, the water of the night began to fill Janine, submerged the cold, gradually rising to the obscure center of her being and overflowing in continuous waves all the way to her whimpering mouth. The moment after, the entire sky stretched out above her, knocked over on her back on the cold earth.”

anguish of living and dying, which further suggests Janine's escape from masculine time, for she is no longer consumed with this notion of life as a finite experience with a linear beginning, middle, and end. We also notice a stark contrast between Camus's syntax in this passage relative to the style employed at the story's beginning. When we first meet Janine, the syntax is precisely that "noun + verb," cause-effect syntax that Kristeva notes as fundamentally masculine, with the sole intention of narrative progress. The sentence structure, in general, is relatively short and simple, driving the reader and Janine from one point or one moment to the next without contemplation. Now at the story's end, the sentences are poetically longwinded, the structure more complex, and Camus stresses the importance of *this* moment and its existential *durée*, rather than the narrative, linear progress from one moment to the next that ultimately advances the characters closer to death. And so, Janine's escape into the desert is an escape and liberation from the masculine world that has forced her into the role of the diffident, biddable wife who finds herself without a future, her life leading only to death. In this moment, Janine revolts, denies death, abandons her husband, and experiences an "adulterous," spiritual interconnection with the cosmos.

While I would like to say that Janine's superlunary arousal and awakening endures as she leaves Marcel forever and establishes her life anew and independent, Camus ends his short story in a wholly unsatisfying and ambiguous manner, with Janine walking back to her hotel room and crawling in bed next to her husband once again. Since Camus ends the story at this point, merely a few lines after Janine's moment in the desert, we could surmise that Janine has discovered a brave new world wherein she can reconnect with her subdued feminine and live a life unaffected or not dominated by an oppressive masculine order. However, Janine's final words, which officially conclude this story, are a bit off-putting. Stirring her husband out of sleep as she gets

back into bed, Janine responds to Marcel's questions with a simple, "Ce n'est rien" or "It's nothing" (34). Of course, we could read this final statement as representative of Janine keeping a secret from Marcel and potentially as optimistic in that she might eventually leave her husband; though, I cannot help but feel unsatisfied with such an analysis, especially as the extreme shift in tone suggests defeat rather than triumph. Why has Janine returned to Marcel? Why does she tell him that nothing is wrong, that nothing has happened? Janine's experience in the desert is certainly worthy of more description and extrapolation than the equivocal, upsetting ending that Camus provides. Her experience was something unique and fantastic that few have ever felt or will ever feel; and for such reason, we would hope or expect to find her forever changed, her life and purpose reinvigorated. At the very least we would expect her to say *something* to Marcel, let him know how frustrated she is with their marriage or divulge some aspect of her epiphany that would indicate her desire for change. Yet, Janine does nothing, says nothing, and returns to bed, to her position as diffident and biddable wife. Thus, I feel as though Janine's disposition and action in the final paragraph are mostly indicative of defeat, of her realization that she is truly and indefinitely trapped, her experience in the desert lamentably transient and unsustainable. Regardless of her experience in the desert, Janine remains afraid of death and dying alone, knowing that her liberating *jouissance* will never reconcile her anxiety of being alone and dying alone. Alternatively, perhaps the ending is more of a social commentary: if Janine were to leave Marcel, she would consequently plunge herself into economic and social destitution. Janine is already an "adulterous" woman, and to be without a husband and without the financial security that Marcel has provided would surely equate to social opprobrium and poverty. To escape the masculine order that controls her life, Janine would indeed have to sacrifice her life, for she could never freely live such a life in a world that demands complete assimilation and obedience.

Thus, at the end she negates her epiphanic jouissance, re-negates her life, purpose, voice, and future in order to resubmit herself to the masculine order, which, for Janine, begins in her marital bed.

Quentin, Jason, and Benjy Compson

In the past two sections, I have discussed two key instances where a feminine order, attempting to escape the oppressive confines of a masculine order, is ultimately subdued, especially as the feminine becomes a threat to the castration-anxious and retributive or correctional masculine. Nevertheless, in *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner presents a situation wherein the masculine order, successfully emasculated and castrated by the feminine, becomes wholly impotent and incapable of reestablishing its supremacy. This emasculation and castration occurs within Quentin's and Jason's sections as the wayward femininity and sexuality of Caddy and Miss Quentin confront and emasculate both brothers. Consequently, in this section I will focus more on the castration and ephemeralization of masculine time than the decapitation and ephemeralization of feminine time. For this reason, I propose that Faulkner predominantly presents a masculine experience of time in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Though I contend that Faulkner writes all four sections according to a masculine understanding of time, I will focus only on Quentin's and Jason's sections as they pertain to emasculation. Though castrated and sterilized, Benjy's section and time do not deny the feminine order like his brother's sections. Additionally, Benjy's castration (both anatomical and temporal) is not by virtue of an emasculating feminine order but is the result of the masculine order of the Compson family, his life tragically negated by his family's anachronistic existence, isolation, desperation, and decay. As such, I will discuss Benjy's section, time, and castration as

they pertain to the sterilization of identity. The fourth section, or Dilsey's section, does not immediately suggest temporal castration, probably because it deals with a female character as its central point of focalization, though its temporal structure is still masculine since Faulkner appears to be the section's authorial narrator. Unlike the others, Dilsey's section exudes some hope, not for the Compson family, but for herself since she is the only character who "can live in the world the Compsons have made" (Hornback 58). Accordingly, Dilsey's section will not receive individual examination; nevertheless, her section will inevitably become germane. Finally, though I propose in this discussion that Quentin's time is both masculine and castrated, I will follow this section with a chapter on queer time, proposing another manner of understanding Quentin's temporal reality. However, for the purposes of this specific argument, I will analyze Quentin's time as characteristically hetero-masculine.

The discussion of time in *The Sound and the Fury*, especially when considering Quentin's and Benjy's sections, is nothing new, and in the past eighty years of criticism, major critics and scholars have seemingly examined, debated, and criticized every theory, notion, and misconception of time that Faulkner presents in this fiction. Sartre is mostly accredited with initiating the discourse on time in this novel. Sartre presents a very Bergsonian and existential view of Faulknerian temporality, that the American writer presents time according to the notion of *durée* (or duration) and memory, where the sense of the natural past is prolonged into the present (Bergson 20). Indeed, in one of the most recent essays on time in Faulkner, Marjorie Pryse notes Faulkner's knowledge of Bergson and examines where Faulkner gets Bergson and where he fails. Pryse's essay and Faulkner's familiarity with Bergson notwithstanding, Sartre does not agree with Faulknerian temporality and metaphysics. As Justin Skirry explains in an essay meant to clarify Sartre's anti-Faulknerian stance, Sartre's main criticism is that Faulkner's

time is clock-based and chronological and that *The Sound and the Fury* renders its characters without futures and with only pasts (Skirry 15). In other words, Sartre claims that Faulkner “decapitates” time (*La Nouvelle Revue Française* 52.2 148). However, Sartre is not entirely against this temporal decapitation, for he also reminds us that Marcel Proust uses a similar technique throughout *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. Sartre is against the fact that Faulkner, unlike Proust, never resolves this tensional, confused, decapitated sense of time which ultimately drives characters to suicide or hurls them into an existential abyss whereas Proust’s characters, through epiphany or logic or French intellectualism, regain or “re-find” (*retrouver*) time. In his essay’s conclusion Sartre expounds that Faulkner ascribes an unrealistic absurdity to human life, and he declares that “un avenir barré, c’est encore un avenir”⁵³ (151). But why is it more realistic to regain time and futurity than to be forever lost in the bottomless pit of the past? In other words, why is this decapitated time, this feeling of having no future, less sensible than the assumed anticipation of tomorrow? Can there not be a multitude of temporal experiences, each of which is equally significant?

This last question is for the most part rhetorical, for the obvious answer is affirmative. Many critics, following Sartre, began to examine the phenomenology of time and how the Compson siblings individually experience time. This new insistence on examining temporal experiences largely aided the study of individual character psychologies and gave credence to these perspectives as realistic possibilities. But still, I believe that one of the major problems with the general temporal analysis of *The Sound and the Fury* is this immediate assumption that time is a neutral and asexual concept, strictly scientific, mathematic, and philosophical even when considering personal experiences. The discourse on time and the terminology used to understand temporality are what largely induce this neutrality and asexuality. In “Textual

⁵³ “a barred future, it’s still a future”

Duration Against Chronological Time: Graphing Memory in Faulkner's Benjy Section," Pryse's essay leads us to believe from the get-go that time and Benjy's experience of time can be understood according to science and math (she even includes line graphs and statistical charts!) and, hence, immediately ascribes a neutral, pedantic, and emotionless conception to time, as if our lives and experiences of time can be reduced to the simplicity of numbers and the rigidity of graphs. Even Sartre's term "decapitated" to describe Faulknerian temporality suggests neutrality, yet it does succeed in evoking the body, yet it evokes the wrong body part. Most critics, including Sartre, have approached the temporality in Faulkner's novel as a universality, as an idea that one should treat and examine as if it were or could be true for every or any individual. In the term "decapitated," the neutrality and universality lies in the fact that all bodies can be decapitated, which consequently implies that Benjy's, Quentin's, and Jason's (note the repetitive masculine) experiences of time are not asexual but *trans*-sexual or *trans*-gendered⁵⁴ and could also be ascribed to Caddy or her daughter, to the female body or all gendered bodies, in general. But, how can we ascribe universality of time to three *homodiegetic* narrators, especially since the purpose of the *first-person* narrative and stream-of-consciousness is to show an *individual* experience and *subjective* perspective?

Thus, I propose that Sartre's "decapitation" be changed to "castration" to more justly note the one-sided gender perspective that this novel purports. And of course, as we recall Cixous's essay "Castration or Decapitation?" we note her distinction between the masculine's castration and the feminine's decapitation: the feminine castrates the masculine with her intransigence and ridiculing or undermining of the masculine order, and the masculine retaliates by decapitating and silencing the feminine to reestablish the masculine order. Obviously, both castration and

⁵⁴ I use *trans*-sexual and *trans*-gendered not according to their popular usages but according to an etymological meaning, of have the ability to cross and transcend sex and gender, and, therefore, the time of men is equally the time of women and any non-normative gender.

decapitation suggest severance and the dismembering of a body part. However, these distinct body parts are wherein the discrepancy lies. For the male, hypothetically speaking, it is the phallus, or the presence of a penis, from which he receives his power, or his biological “right” to dominance. Of course, as Jacques Lacan has made quite clear, the phallus is the “privileged signifier” and the fear of castration is always present in the male (Lacan 1187). The female, nonetheless, derives her power and potential subversion of male authority from her head, her voice and ability to laugh at the male. Hence, while castration is what disempowers the male, decapitation is what disempowers and silences the female. If we include Kristeva’s and Irigaray’s theories of masculine and feminine time, we can surmise that Faulkner’s writing style of chronological addition is in stark contrast to the circular, regenerative, and monumental characteristics of feminine time. As a result, the severance of the teleological, chronological, and linear time that Faulkner displays must equate to castration, not decapitation. Of course, I have heretofore assumed that Faulkner presents only a masculine time in *The Sound and the Fury*, and a few critics have published papers presenting critiques that argue otherwise.

In separate essays, both Marsha Warren⁵⁵ and Bing Shao⁵⁶ claim that Quentin’s section initially follows a masculine sense of time but slowly disintegrates (or feminizes) as the eldest Compson child struggles with his future and with memories of his mother and sister. Eventually, as Warren and Shao assert, Quentin commits suicide to escape from time, ultimately marking his transition to feminine time. Warren specifically notes that Quentin’s desire to die aligns him with the feminine, because it symbolizes his wish to escape from masculine time (108-10). Shao, on the other hand, simply notes the transition from a linear time to a circular time to depict the transition from a masculine to a feminine time (53-4). While I applaud Warren and Shao for

⁵⁵ “Time, Space, and Semiotic Discourse in the Feminization/Disintegration of Quentin Compson” (1988)

⁵⁶ “Time, Death, and Gender: The Quentin Section in *The Sound and the Fury*” (1994)

looking at time in Faulkner as gender-influenced, I must contest the presence of a consistent or accentuated feminine time within the Quentin section or anywhere in this novel. The disintegration of masculine time does not immediately indicate the emergence of the feminine. To de-masculinize or to emasculate does not mean to feminize, for this would ascribe a sort of unjustified simplicity to the feminine. For the latter to be true, we would need to consider masculine time and feminine time as antitheses, as negations, but negative hermeneutics cannot account for sex and gender, or for that matter sexed and gendered time. Hence, this issue is what Irigaray refers to as “sexual difference,” not sexual negation. Negation suggests interchangeability, the ability to adopt “the structural position of the other sex” (Olkowski 79). Yet, the theoretical negation of one sex in order to adopt the place of the other does not overcome the biological, cultural, and linguistic differences and limits that precede the original sex. These differences exist within the “interval” that separates the sexes, and within this gap are language and the phallogocentricity of the Symbolic order (88). And Irigaray stresses that sex as negation is the primary reason, historically and philosophically, why women “have been women only in relation to the determinations made for them by men,” by a system of oppositions, the effect of which is “to displace women from any situation they might establish for themselves in their own terms” (77-78). Therefore, we cannot simply regard the deterioration of time and futurity in this novel as feminization, but rather, we should consider it as a de-masculinization, distinct from the feminine and possessing its own, unique features.

While we do not witness a consistent or unmistakably feminine time in this novel, we do witness the castration and emasculation of masculine time, especially in Quentin’s and Jason’s sections. For the most part, in both sections we witness a time that is chronological or chronologically organizable. Since we are dealing with the thoughts of homodiegetic narrators

and stream of consciousness, the chronology is not immediately apparent, and thus we read this novel in terms of a fragmented chronology. Each section and each event, nevertheless, has a datability and linearity relative to the clock, calendar, or to each other. Additionally, we even understand time to be largely teleological in Quentin's section and Jason's section, for both are concerned in one way or another, implicitly or explicitly, with *the* end or a particular end. For Quentin, this end is death and suicide, a future which he completely embraces during his final day. For Jason, his desire for economic stability and prosperity and his cause-and-effect planning of the future emphasizes this teleology. Now, however, the issue of masculine time in this novel becomes a question of how Faulkner alludes to a feminine time and order that effectively emasculates and castrates this masculine linearity and teleology.

Returning to Warren's discussion of time in Quentin's section, we do indeed witness in Quentin's section the destruction of progress linear time, the castration of masculine time, and as Sartre claims, the deterioration of the future. Nevertheless, this destruction of the linear does not thence induce the cyclical or regenerative, but rather it implies a castration of masculine time, which effectively highlights its teleology. This point is where Warren's argument falters. To align feminine time with disorder, as Cixous does, is much different from aligning it with death (and in my discussion of queer time, I will further note why we must vacate this *idée reçue* of the feminine as aligned with death, and vice versa). This feminine disorder is not disorderly because it essentially lacks any stability or uniformity, but rather it is disorderly because it is at odds with the masculine norm that many consider universal and universally stable. The feminine stresses a regenerative modality rather than a teleology or a finitude, and when confronted with masculine time, the feminine is able to castrate and emasculate its other. A perfect example of this confrontation and castration of the masculine occurs when Quentin remembers himself and

Caddy at the branch having a sexually charged conversation about committing murder/suicide and incest:

you go on home its late
all right
her clothes rustled I didnt move they stopped rustling
are you going in like I told you
I didnt hear anything
Caddy
yes I will if you want me to I will
I sat up she was sitting on the ground her hands clasped about her knee
go on to the house like I told you
yes Ill do anything you want me to anything yes
she didnt even look at me I caught her shoulder and shook her hard
you shut up
I shook her
you shut up you shut up
yes
she lifted her face then I saw she wasnt even looking at me at all . . . (Faulkner 99; my italics)

In this excerpt I have marked Caddy's lines with italics, and the other lines include Quentin's words to his sister and his narration. The siblings' conversation about murder and incest is ending, and Quentin tells Caddy to go back to the house. Though technically affirming that she will go back to the house, Caddy's responses suggest rather that she is agreeing to have sex with her brother. Quentin desires incest with Caddy to psychologically negate his sister's indiscretions with other men and to exorcise the past with a self-constructed truth that will effectively restore a sense of order for Quentin. Yet, Caddy's affirmative responses prove this desire impossible. She symbolically castrates Quentin, castrates and emasculates his sense of time by proving that he will never be able to change history and that ultimately he is a powerless slave to this teleological masculine time. And surely, Quentin underscores this powerlessness at the end of his section when he seems fixated on the word "temporary," on the ephemerality of his own existence (112-3). Moreover, in the tenth line of this excerpt, we see a chiastic quality

to Caddy's speech that exhibits, yet again, this circularity of feminine time: "yes . . . anything/anything yes." In Caddy's affirmation to Quentin's desires, the chiasmic, circular quality of her speech denies the teleology of Quentin's language and time, insinuating a syntactic structure more concerned with spatiality than temporality. Caddy begins where she ends and vice versa, but she denies finality, the doom and death that her brother's language purports. Recalling Kristeva, we see in Quentin's language that his sentences follow this linear structure, this Faulknerian syntax of chronological addition that has become indicative of the masculine. Of course, upon hearing his sister's affirmations, Quentin immediately responds by trying to negate Caddy's sinful desires, by trying, yet again, to correct the past and prove himself dominant. Again, this second attempt is useless. He notices that Caddy is not looking at him, a sort of paradoxical intransigence wherein she agrees but subsequently denies assigning any efficacy to Quentin's desire to reconstruct time according to his own moral order.

In Jason's section, we see castration take on a comparably symbolic role: the emasculation of his masculine ego equally becomes a castration of his masculine temporality. Jason's only concern in life is money. To Jason, time is money and most of the time he thinks about the money he has lost and the past burdens that have caused him to lose money. Thus, like Marcel in "La Femme Adultère," Jason's time is the time of business and economics, the time of his narrative essentially controlled by the time of commerce and the stock exchange. Ironically, Jason remarks, "I haven't got any money; I've been too busy to make any" (152). If we correlate this remark to Jason's time, we can therefore understand that Jason has no time. In *Time and World in William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury' and 'Absalom, Absalom!'* Bernhard Radloff explains that Jason is always "behind time" and "behind schedule," that "Jason's plans for the future always fall short of expectation because he has too little time" (109). For Jason, if

time is money (and vice versa) then the flow of time is also equal to the flow of money. Although he steals the money that Caddy sends to her daughter, in the end, the female Quentin returns the favor and thus completely stops (castrates and emasculates) the flux of Jason's masculine, linear time.

This notion of castration is fortified near the end of the fourth section when Jason first speaks with the sheriff and then later when he tries to imagine having sex with Lorraine to divert his mind from his stolen money. While speaking with the sheriff about Quentin stealing and running away with his money, Faulkner writes that Jason's "sense of injury and impotence [was] feeding upon its own sound" (188). While the use of impotence here largely refers to powerlessness and helplessness, we equally understand that Jason's sense of authority in the Compson household and his general sense of masculinity are maintained by the fact that he is the household's solitary source of income. Furthermore, the notion that his impotence has a sound indicates that this impotence is externalizing itself, audibly or orally in this case, but sexually later. With his money gone and, effectively, his time, Jason is also deprived of his manhood. Later, trying to get his mind off his niece and his lost money, Jason tries to think about Lorraine, a prostitute from whom he obviously buys sex. First, literally, with no money, Jason would be unable to pay Lorraine for sex—this being another indication of impotence, of both finances and his manhood. Second, while trying to think of himself and Lorraine in bed, he is unable to sustain this image or proceed imaginarily with the sex act:

"'I'll think of something else,' he said, so he thought about Lorraine. He imagined himself in bed with her, only he was just lying beside her, pleading with her to help him, then he thought of money again, and that he had been outsmarted by a woman, a girl. If he could just believe it was the man who had robbed him. But to have been robbed . . . worst of all, by a bitch girl." (191)

In this passage we see Jason's imagining of himself and Lorraine in bed quickly eradicated by his feelings of emasculation. He also pleads with Lorraine for help, which suggests either financial or emotional help in coping with his family issues or sexual help because he is physically impotent and is unable to fornicate. Third, Jason's castration is suggested not only within his thoughts of Lorraine but also in the fact that Jason is the "first sane Compson since before Culloden and (a childless bachelor) hence the last" (212). Technically, as the last sexually potent and mentally capable Compson male, Jason represents the last chance for the Compson family to maintain posterity and genealogy. Although Benjy is actually the youngest Compson son and, hence, the end of the bloodline, his intellectual disability and physical castration prevent him from procreating and perpetuating the family's lineage. Jason, however, is too consumed with the past, with his financial and emotional castration, to think about procreation and posterity. He alienates himself from his family and his ancestry, and he isolates himself socially, constantly defining everyone else as "other." Therefore, he does not follow through with his duty to history that masculine time induces, failing not only to perpetuate the Compson name but also to start a family of his own, to bequeath affluence and descendants to the state and to the human race.

For Benjy, the emasculation and castration of time rests on the notion that he does not comprehend time, especially the idea of a future. His sense of time is focused on the past and present, but mostly on a past that seems more current, immediate, and significant than the actual present. For this reason, critics have mostly analyzed Benjy's section according to Bergson's theory of duration, that the present is defined by whatever events one perceives to still be important, whether they occurred two minutes or two years ago. Perhaps the most exaggerated example of duration in this section occurs while Luster and Benjy are at the branch looking for

Luster's lost quarter. Taking off his shoes and rolling up his trousers to get into the water, Benjy thinks, "I hushed and got in the water *and Roskus came and said to come to supper and Caddy said It's not supper time yet. Im not going*" (11; Faulkner's italics). The first clause takes place in the narrative present, April 7, 1928. Marked by Faulkner's italics, the second clause is a memory from 1898 on the day of Damuddy's death. In fact, the italicized portion is chronologically the very first event in the narrative of Benjy's section while the first clause chronologically represents one of the narrative's final events. Thus, the narrative and linguistic present and the past-present differ by thirty years. Nonetheless, Benjy's memory apprehends both events as occurring in the present, almost in a way that indicates an atemporal recurrence or regeneration of past events. The italics are merely a marker for clarity so that the reader may discern the impression of a chronology. Nevertheless, without the italics (as in Benjy's mind), this sentence would mark perfectly the linearity of masculine time, of the "and . . . and . . . and" structure of the perpetual present and chronological addition. The paradox is that the linearity of this sentence marks an inversion of the past and present and emphasizes syntactically the notion that the past becomes the future (of the sentence and Benjy's mental reality). In his essay on Faulkner, Jean Pouillon writes, "The past, therefore, not only *was* but *is* and *will be*" (81; my italics). If there is any section in this novel that we could argue as potentially displaying a feminine sense of time, it would be Benjy's. With its discernible chronology and continually regenerated past, Benjy's section, though, seems to possess both masculine and feminine qualities. As a whole, Benjy's section is disorderly and has a chiastic quality—it begins where it ends and ends where it begins. Still, this section does not engender the newness and hope that feminine time produces. Rather, Benjy's time is marked by the sameness of an irredeemable past, by a time that has no hope for progression or posterity, and by a future that is inevitably

chosen for him, especially by Jason, who has Benjy castrated and, as revealed in the Appendix, sends him to the state asylum in Jackson. Accordingly, with the presence of the Appendix, we can possibly ascribe a teleology to Benjy's section, a teleology of irrecoverable loss. And as his family sends him away to Jackson, the loss of his freedom and soon his life evoke this teleology.

Hence, Benjy's story is primarily a story of loss and negation. He loses his birth name ("Benjy" represents the negative meaning of "Maury"). He loses his pasture, Caddy, his penis, his right to life. Tragically, Benjy's past eventually negates his future—this notion is ironically linked with the notion that Benjy's past *becomes* his future. And as Faulkner notes in the Appendix, Benjy "could not remember his sister *but only the loss of her*" and "he remembered not the pasture *but only its loss*" (213; my italics). Finally, at the very end of this section, we see crystalized in Benjy's mind two metaphorical images of loss. First, while preparing for bed in the narrative present, Benjy notes, "I got undressed and I looked at myself and I began to cry" (47). Benjy cries because of his lacking of genitals, and although the castration occurred fifteen years ago, he is equally disturbed and saddened by the sight of his body as if the castration only recently happened. This crying also suggests that Benjy is unaware of his sexuality, and he cries only because he comprehends the physical lack, not the sexual significance of the castration. We also see this sexual unawareness when Benjy moans at the girls passing by, unable to articulate his desires, he repeats several times, "I was trying to say" (34). Benjy knows what he wants (Caddy? a pre-Oedipal desire for wholeness and bodily gratification?), but he is unable to articulate or even comprehend what that desire means. His castration, the negation of his sex and genitalia, and his body as a whole (that is, the whole that constitutes the lacking) consequently becomes a symbol of his loss, especially of his lost time, future, and hope. Second, at the very

end of his section, Benjy goes back to 1898 during the day of Damuddy's death, and he remembers going to bed and falling asleep with Caddy. Benjy remembers:

Father went to the door and looked at us again. Then the dark came back, and *he stood black* in the door, and then *the door turned black* again. Caddy held me and I could hear us all, and *the darkness*, and something I could smell. And then I could see the windows, where the trees were buzzing. *Then the dark began to go in smooth*, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been asleep. (48; my italics)

This final image stands as a metaphor for what becomes of Benjy's life during his section and this novel—the darkness of this past image *becomes* the darkness of his future. First, Benjy notes the image of his father going black, then the door. The room is already black. Finally, the window goes black. This pervasive and slowly advancing darkness symbolizes the gradual loss that Benjy experiences in his life. Interestingly enough, the window is the final image to go dark. The house and the bedroom have all gone dark, perhaps symbolizing the eventual dissolution of the Compson family as well as Benjy's displacement from the family when he is sent to Jackson. The darkening of the window, and hence of the outside, suggests the negation of any hope and order, for all that lies ahead in more of the same darkness and disorder. And the novel famously ends with Benjy furiously bellowing in a scene that evokes the title's and the story's connection to *Macbeth*: “a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing” (Shakespeare 874). With his moans and bellows, Benjy signals the negation of meaning in the Compson world, the loss of order, and the doom of a futureless existence.

Even still, Benjy's time, and the time of his brothers, is predominantly masculine, and so we should be wary of reading this novel's temporal representations as universal modalities, especially when considering gender and sex. We cannot assume that the castrated and futureless times of Benjy, Quentin, and Jason are equally a reality for Dilsey or for Caddy and her daughter, though this novel does not devote a homodiegetic narration to a female character to

reveal her firsthand experience of time. If such a section existed, especially in the fourth section, perhaps we could then deconstruct the masculine and feminine times and determine where they overlap in the Faulknerian storyworld. Without this first-person feminine narrative, one of the largest conclusions that we can extract from this novel's temporal structures is a critique of masculine time, history, and the Southern tradition. Especially in the cases of Quentin and Jason, Faulkner presents both brothers as anachronisms. Both cling to those Southern values, morals, and traditions that have deteriorated during the postbellum years. For Quentin, his anachronism is an issue of female chastity, of preserving the family name and honor. For Jason, his anachronism is an issue of patriarchy, familial dominance, financial authority, and racial supremacy. And as the years pass, Quentin and Jason become more anachronistic, clinging to the past while society progresses and changes and consequently isolating themselves in both time and space. On the other hand, Benjy is not an anachronism, but, rather, his section tells the story of how his family's anachronistic, hypocritical, and isolated existence tragically affects and eventually negates his existence. Although we see that Benjy wants to express himself, to articulate his actions and thoughts to his family, he is unable to comprehend or rationalize his existence. His entire being is at stake, since, if he cannot justify his actions and vindicate himself, his family will forever send him away. Thus, we see that the Compson family imposes a masculine linearity and teleology on Benjy's time as Jason sends him off to his death in Jackson. Benjy's lacking of a future is not a result of choice or a fatal flaw but a result of this familial imposition of anachronistic Southern morality and respectability, which allows no room for Benjy or any intellectually disabled person to live as an equal.

Accordingly, we return to the problem of the nuclear family and the time that encompasses this familial model. In practically every example of which I have thus far spoken

in this study, Faulkner and Camus have always called into question the family and family time, even if implicitly, and, for such reason, we return to the issues concerning the Child and child-rearing, reproduction and *genealogical futurism*. Whereas several scholars have referred to family time as akin to “reproductive futurism,” I wish to alter this term slightly by swapping reproduction with genealogy. I make this change because reproduction, I feel, does not entirely describe what family time and posterity comprise, for this issue is not merely one of biology and procreation but is equally one of familial morality, tradition, legacy, patrimony, and patronymy, all of which genealogy assumes. This term is also seemingly paradoxical, and for good reason. Genealogical futurism or, as Halberstam names it, generational time is paradoxical because it supposes a future via reproduction and inheritance (which is still largely patrimonial and patronymic) but also it “connects the family to the historical past of the nation, and glances ahead to connect the family to the future of both familial and national stability” (Halberstam 5).

In Faulkner’s and Camus’s works, both authors question who is upholding this supposed “stability” and whether genealogical futurism and family time can even create stability. In *Sanctuary*, *Requiem for a Nun*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and practically every other novel he wrote, it is no accident that Faulkner presents family after family, all of which are chained to legacies, desirous of posterity, consumed by (mostly primogeniture) inheritance, and all of which eventually collapse, for genealogical futurism becomes wholly impractical and unsustainable. In *The Sound and the Fury*, genealogical futurism cannot justify or respect the life of an individual like Benjy because, if genealogical futurism is purportedly to create familial and national “stability,” it must proceed hand-in-hand with eugenics, ensuring that the abject do not continue and propagate for the sake of family legacy and honor, capitalistic progress, and social homogeneity and order. The irony, of course, is that by castrating and then sending away Benjy

by the authority of genealogical futurism, the Compsons, indeed, incite their self-implosion. Additionally, in *Requiem for a Nun*, Temple can no longer suffer her husband and family, not only attempting to run away from them but also wanting to run away with another man. And might we place blame on Temple's judicial father in *Sanctuary* for her desperate desire to escape her family? Throughout the novel, Temple's family is nonexistent, especially her father, who only assumes his role of overbearing patriarch at the novel's end, after Temple's abduction and the corruption of her innocence, purity, and Southern respectability have ultimately called *his* name, honor, and judgeship into question. Trying to re-assimilate his daughter back into the world of the ceremonious Southern aristocracy, Temple's father practically imprisons her and ensures that she will marry Gowan to merge the Drake and Stevens legacies. But as Temple makes so abundantly clear, as the Drake and Stevens families merged in the patronymic name of genealogical futurism, she, Temple Drake, was killed and resurrected as Mrs. *Gowan Stevens*, yet again her identity sterilized. Attempting to revive Temple Drake while her marital-familial life exacerbates her ennui, Mrs. Gowan Stevens commits adultery and tries to runaway with Pete—the *identity* of Temple Drake still assumed by the prurient world of the Memphis underground. And as she tries to revive Temple Drake, Mrs. Gowan Stevens theoretically destroys the Drake-Stevens pedigree and bond but, in doing so, instigates inadvertently the very real destruction of her family.

In Camus's canon, we see the similar destruction of the family in *Le Malentendu*; though, as previously mentioned, an absurd world and God (Le Vieux) incite this familial destruction, thereby denying to entrust any notion of genealogical futurity with credence or efficacy. In "La Femme Adultère" Camus's criticism of genealogical futurism is commensurate with Faulkner's critique. The marriage of Janine and Marcel is more obviously Camus's initial criticism, for

their union is wholly and traditionally unequal. Janine, living in and influenced by a world that stresses marriage, fidelity, and procreation as institutions of happiness, only cares to stay with Marcel because he “makes her exist” in this masculine and teleological world, wherein, if she were alone, she would be marginalized as the abject and would inevitably die alone. Thus, like Temple, Janine is considered adulterous as she realizes that her marriage and husband alone will never give her happiness nor do they make her exist; instead, they have suppressed her existence, sterilized her identity. And we could say the same of procreation within this marriage. Janine declares several times that she and Marcel have no children. While one could argue that these statements suggest Janine’s desire to procreate, I believe the opposite to be true. Janine never unequivocally voices her desire for children; rather, it appears that Janine’s mentioning that she has yet to procreate is equivalent to her statements that Marcel makes her exist in this world—statements that simply mirror the conventions that she is expected to follow if she wishes to “exist” in this world. Janine knows, nonetheless, that, like her marriage, a child will not suddenly give her life meaning and happiness. And though critics like Anthony Rizzuto⁵⁷ and Louise Horowitz⁵⁸ have censured Camus’s works as misogynistic for denying his female characters procreation, in the case of Janine and Marcel, procreation and the adherence to genealogical futurism would not reintroduce life and love into an already lifeless, loveless marriage. Rather, antithetical to the idea of giving new life, reproduction would intensify the lifelessness and lovelessness of their marriage, especially the existential doom that Janine is already facing. Therefore, not giving Janine and Marcel children, Camus silently critiques and repudiates the notion of marriage, childbearing/rearing, and, consequently, reproductive futurism as inducing generational and social stability and happiness.

⁵⁷ “Camus and a Society Without Women” (1983)

⁵⁸ “Of Women and Arabs: Sexual and Racial Polarization in Camus” (1987)

CHAPTER 3

THE QUEER TIMES OF QUENTIN AND CALIGULA

While discussing this notion of genealogical and reproductive futurism, we must note perhaps the greatest opposition to this seemingly pandemic conception of time and futurity: that is, the existence of queer time. The relevance of this section to sterility will become more obvious as this discussion advances; and still, if we are to understand the heteronormativity of genealogical futurism as tautologically representative of life and the fertile perpetuation of humanity, then we could immediately surmise that queer time is tautologically representative of death and sterility, that is, non-procreativity. Defining queer time is no easy matter, nor should we strive to limit queer time to a specific notion of temporality, especially given the diversity comprising the queer. Still, it will be helpful to have some idea of what queer time is or could be, how and where it emerges, and what larger social consequences it induces. I contend that we can read both Quentin Compson's as well as, and most importantly, Caligula's experiences of time as queer. Of course, this contention immediately assumes that both Quentin and Caligula are queer characters, which I believe is an entirely plausible, if not crucial, argument if we wish to move past this prevalent and rigid analysis of both Quentin and Caligula as moral monsters or dejected characters suffering from some sort of existential dilemma and anguish allegedly inherent to the human condition. To do so, I will first map out several comprehensions of queer time relative to what have largely become the pedestrian temporalities of the heteronormative and the progressively emerging homonormative. Then, I will move on to both Quentin and Caligula, first, explaining how we might read both as queer characters and, second, analyzing their metaphysics as temporally queer in their own right.

Queer time, as we begin to wrap our heads around what this term could mean, initially stands as a temporality immediately influenced by what queer sexualities or sex acts insinuate. Though no one is just in saying that the queer will or could never perform or enjoy the heteronormative sex act, obviously the queer have received their status as *queer* largely for the reason that their sexual jouissance does not conform exclusively to heterosexual intercourse and practices. Other than carnal pleasure and gratification, heterosexual intercourse and insemination intends and valorizes reproduction, from which clearly generates this notion of genealogical and reproductive futurism. If heterosexual intercourse and procreation indeed “create the future,” queer sexuality, consequently, would stand opposite to procreation and the future. As I mentioned earlier, if society decrees reproduction and the to-be-intrauterine as controlling and generating “the future,” society then begins to reject, consciously or unconsciously, and deem the respective lives and futures of the queer, who are still alive and were once those to-be-intrauterine children, as secondary and worthless. In his titularly pithy book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Edelman notes the relationship between queer temporality and the death drive, expiating:

If the fate of the queer is to figure the fate that cuts the thread of futurity, if the jouissance, the corrosive enjoyment, intrinsic to queer (non)identity annihilates the fetishistic jouissance that works to *consolidate* identity by allowing reality to coagulate around its ritual reproduction, then the only oppositional status to which our queerness could ever lead would depend on our taking seriously the place of the death drive we’re called on to figure and insisting, against the cult of the Child and the political order it enforces, that we . . . do not intend a new politics, a better society, a brighter tomorrow, since all of these fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of the future. (30-1; Edelman’s italics)

In his very contentious work, Edelman claims that instead of the queer countering the persistence of the Christian and conservative ideological attacks on queerness as “future-negating,” as pro-abortion and tautologically anti-life, and as a threat to Western civilization, the queer should

embrace these invectives and the death drive not only as intrinsic and immitigable in the eyes of the opposition but also as positively rupturing the social and civic orders that have deemed them the other and the abject, while still adamantly demanding equal rights (26). For Edelman, the temporality and futurity of the queer must end in the here and now, for the future is “kids stuff,” “mere repetition and just as lethal as the past” (31). From Edelman, we then extract the connection of queer time and the death drive—this conception will be crucial when analyzing Quentin and Caligula.

Likewise, in her book *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgendered Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, Halberstam’s understanding of queer time, with similarities to Edelman’s, is a bit more specific and more hopeful, though not future-ful. Halberstam’s book considers queer time as uniquely opposed or counter to the general and mostly heteronormative conceptions of time while noting additionally the emergence of queer time during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. And so, Halberstam writes:

Queer time perhaps emerges most spectacularly, at the end of the twentieth century, from within those gay communities whose horizons of possibility have been severely diminished by the AIDS epidemic. . . . *The constantly diminishing future creates a new emphasis on the here, the present, the now, and while the threat of no future hovers overhead like a storm cloud, the urgency of being also expands the potential of the moment, and . . . squeezes new possibilities out of the time at hand.* . . . Queer time, as it flashes into view in the heart of crisis, exploits the potential of what Charles-Pierre Baudelaire called in relation to modernism “The transient, the fleeting, the contingent.” Some gay men have responded to the threat of AIDS, for example, by rethinking the conventional emphasis on longevity and futurity, and by making community in relation to risk, disease, infection, and death. *And yet queer time, even as it emerges from the AIDS crisis, is not only about compression and annihilation; it is also about the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing.* (2; my italics)

Thus, Halberstam not only notes the “no future” characteristic of queer time, she additionally notes that queer temporal structures are in opposition to conventional and normative temporal modalities, including family time and genealogical futurism, the feminine “biological clock,”

capitalism and production, social time or the middle-class customs of respectability and scheduling, and longevity and safety (as opposed to a “live fast and die young” lifestyle of risk-taking). In his book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Muñoz quite bluntly calls this time “straight time” (22). And for Halberstam, a few vivid examples of those groups and persons living by a queer time include, but are not limited to, HIV/AIDS victims, drug addicts, prostitutes, artists, club kids of the rave culture, and any queers who dare to live a life of “stretched-out adolescence” (153). While Halberstam’s comprehension of queer time is certainly very appealing, well explained, and far more pragmatic than the usually abstruse metaphysics of time, I must question why she believes that queer time has only emerged since the early eighties at the outset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic? Queer individuals and groups have probably been living lives counter to straight time throughout history, though their narratives are certainly less spoken of or vivid as the one’s that Halberstam explores. Additionally, while the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a good example of how queer time might be one of an ever-diminishing future since the infection and disease were originally oracles of death and still prove fatal despite prodigious medical advances, does the future of the queer not diminish simply by way of being marginalized as abject, as worthless, contemptible flesh in a society that stresses adherence to convention and assimilation? In a society that deems anyone as the less-than-desirable Other, what notion of futurity could possibly exist for those abject bodies when that society wishes them not to have a future? Essentially, I contend that queer time has always existed as long as cultures have deemed the “deviant,” the “aberrant,” the “abnormal” as sordid and unworthy, even before the nightmare of HIV and AIDS, and, accordingly, I take my analysis of queer time all the way back to Caligula—that is, Camus’s Caligula.

Quentin

As I have already discussed, the time of Quentin Compson is one that has aroused much interest in scholars, and, for the most part, Quentin's temporal experience has largely been assessed according to his obsession with morality and tradition, his belief that the past is more important than the present and future, and his inability to reconcile the past with the existent changes within the present. Consequently, I implore that we question what Quentin's obsession with Southern morality and tradition could potentially suggest about his sexuality, rather than simply his adherence to hetero-masculine convention, for I contend that Quentin does not solely adhere to hetero-masculine or normative standards despite his failed efforts to restore moral order. Hence, I claim that Quentin is queer and eventually comes to represent many of the important characteristics of queer time that both Edelman and Halberstam considered in their respective works, namely the death drive and the denial of longevity, inheritance, safety, and bourgeois respectability.

In the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner writes that Quentin "loved not his sister's body but some concept of Compson honor precariously and (he knew well) only temporarily supported by the minute fragile membrane of her maidenhead" (207). Quentin "loved not the idea of the incest which he would not commit, but some presbyterian concept of its eternal punishment" (207). And finally, Quentin "loved death above all," "loved and lived in a deliberate and almost *perverted* anticipation of death as a lover loves and deliberately refrains from the waiting willing friendly tender incredible body of his beloved, until he can no longer bear not the refraining but the restraint and so flings, hurls himself, relinquishing, drowning" (208; my italics). Before I begin to extrapolate the transparent presence of Quentin's death drive in these lines as well as in the novel's text, I will first explore what "type" of relationship

Quentin has with Death. Doreen Fowler notes persuasively the connection between death and sex in this novel; however, she mistakenly claims that the death that Faulkner speaks of in the Appendix is inherently and strictly feminine (Fowler 3). While it has certainly become a scholarly *idée fixe* to immediately associate the feminine with death, have we ever questioned whether Death should or needs to be gendered? And yes, Fowler, and many other scholars, could easily support her claim to this feminine death by noting that Quentin quotes Saint Francis of Assisi's dying words of "Little Sister Death" and, hence, associates the feminine with Death (49). Yet, the implications of considering why Quentin associates his sister and the feminine with Death are much different from the implications of blindly assuming that Quentin's and Saint Francis's words unequivocally signify a truism of Death's femininity. Still, even if we are to assume Death as feminine, must we then consider Quentin's relationship with Death as heteronormative and heterosexual, wherein Quentin would need to occupy the role of the masculine? Or, can we consider this Quentin-Death liaison as queer⁵⁹?

Looking at Quentin's love of Death through the heteronormative lens that Fowler's argument purports, we then need to question how Quentin displays himself as masculine and how Death displays "herself" as feminine. However, immediately as we try to do such a deconstruction, we see that Quentin seems to represent the feminine, but only, of course, as we consider this relationship according to heteronormative convention. Quentin is the one waiting for his deadly lover, rather than the conventionally masculine "take-charge" attitude of romantic competition. Quentin is also the one that swoons over Death's appeal, and swooning is never associated with men⁶⁰; men must not swoon, for to do so would mean to make themselves open

⁵⁹ At the time, Faulkner used the now pejorative "perverted" to describe Quentin's love of Death, which still suggests something "abnormal" or not heteronormative about this love.

⁶⁰ Looking up "swoon" in the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, it was to no surprise that every example of this verb considers only a woman swooning over a man, who is always in a superior position.

to vulnerability and subordination, which is contrary to the masculine order. Bearing in mind, as well, that death is equally a euphemism for sex, as Quentin “flings” and “hurls” himself toward the Charles River, toward death, he is equally flinging himself toward his first sexual encounter with Death. Quentin is, of course, a virgin, and Death, the skilled lover. Yet again, Quentin is the one in a swoon, seeming to fill the stereotypical feminine role but not the masculine.

Quentin’s role as the feminine in a hetero-relational dyad is further plausible as he notes that his friends often call his roommate, Shreve, his “husband”—Quentin, then, assuming the role of Shreve’s wife (50). And certainly, near the section’s end, Faulkner gives us specific instances during which Shreve and Quentin’s friendship is marked by something more than just homosociality: (1) when Shreve twice puts his hand on Quentin’s knee, presumably trying to console his friend after his arrest, and (2) when Shreve tries to help Quentin clean up and nurse his wounds after his fight with Gerald Bland. In both cases, Quentin, however, pulls away from Shreve’s hands and touch; though, his aversion to Shreve’s touch in these moments, probably since they are not alone, is less an issue of disinterest or a want of independence than an issue of the social limits to homosocial interaction. We could also note that Quentin continually touches or can feel his letter to Shreve in his coat pocket. While we could say that such awareness is simply Quentin’s irresoluteness about committing suicide, we might say that the letter represents a metonymic displacement of desire—Quentin touches the letter because he knows he cannot touch Shreve. Finally, in the section’s final paragraph, Quentin’s final thoughts, presumably before he leaves his dorm that evening to commit suicide, are ultimately about Shreve; Quentin can actually feel his letter to his roommate “crackling through the cloth” of his coat—the crackling or the letter equally evocative of Quentin’s crackling heart and strained desires (113). And so, Quentin’s last thoughts are not about his sister or directly about Death, but are about his

friend and, subtextually, about how they can never be more than roommates; never can Shreve be more than Quentin's phantasmatic husband. Can it then be the case that Shreve represents Death or Quentin's love of Death just as much, if not more, than Caddy or any alleged femininity that one might ascribe to Death?

With all the latter in mind, I feel that we can no longer properly consider Death as innately and strictly feminine or Quentin's relationship with Death as heteronormative. And still, there are additional examples suggestive of Quentin's potential queerness, noticeably his noting of times when other male characters, other than Shreve, touch his knees or arms: (1) while on the trolley, Quentin remarks that a black man touched his knee while passing by, and (2) later while speaking with the Deacon, Quentin remarks, "He touched my arm, lightly, his hand has that worn, gentle quality of niggers' hands" (63). While we note the historical racism of these two examples, we also notice Quentin's fetishization of the black male body, especially the Deacon's hands and touch, which Quentin seems to enjoy. But, still keeping all these sexual complications in mind, if we consider Quentin as a queer character, his love of Death as queer, and his relationship with or desire for Shreve as queer, we can begin to comprehend why Quentin's temporal reality becomes one of future-negation, of no future.

Returning to the issue of Quentin and Shreve's "marriage," we might consider Shreve and Quentin's potential attraction or love of his roommate as transitively commensurate with his love of Death. But how might Shreve come to represent Death? To answer this question, we must return to the realities and conventions of the Southern tradition. In the Appendix, Faulkner writes that Quentin's desire to commit incest with Caddy—though, it is unclear whether Faulkner deems this desire as unconsciously, subconsciously, or consciously self-constructed—is not based out of lust for his sister's body but is due to "some presbyterian concept of its eternal

punishment.” This remark indicates that not only is Quentin aware of these Southern and religious values but also he equally wants to break these rules for a masochistic desire to be punished. We could say the same of his relationship with Shreve, that such type of love according to Presbyterian dogma would ensure eternal punishment. As such, we can possibly analyze Quentin, his desires and queerness as redolent with Edelman’s connection of the queer with the death drive. And while Quentin promotes and tries to uphold a now moribund, Compson value of female chastity, his repressed desires are still starkly opposed to those same traditions to which he clings. Thus, unable to reconcile tradition with desire, past with present, Quentin perceives his life as futureless, and by committing suicide, he effectively negates his future.

While Quentin’s suicide is obviously indicative of the relationship between queerness and the death drive, his time is also characteristic of Halberstam’s theory of queer time as opposed to the temporal structures around family and bourgeois sociality, longevity, and inheritance. On Quentin’s last day of life, we note his rejection of the clock. Quentin remembers his father’s comment that “clocks slay time” and soon breaks his pocket watch, trying to focus his mind away from the arbitrary readings of a mechanical dial (54). The clock, as Faulkner presents it, becomes the predominant temporal structure not only in Quentin’s world but in everyone’s reality, even despite the fact that it inaccurately and damagingly displays a time that controls our lives. The clock then becomes the primary figure of time as progress, of capitalism and production, of the old aphorism “early to bed, early to rise,” the time of bourgeois scheduling and respectability, and although the clock is meant to show the “present” time, it becomes, rather, a figure of the irredeemable past and the ever-diminishing future. As Quentin tries to reject this time, he breaks his watch, and he skips class. With the past as unrecoverable

and the future as ever-diminishing or non-existent, Quentin's chapter, his final day on June Second, 1910, becomes indicative of Halberstam's relating of queer time with Baudelairean modernity—queer time as constituting “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent” (Baudelaire 684). Though Quentin's time soon becomes a time of compression and annihilation, it is also a time that is arguably about the *here* and *now*, for the *then* and *there* have already been negated. And how could we deny that Quentin's time on his last day of life is not about the here and now since his day is all about exploration and wandering, about squeezing new possibilities out of the very short time he has left, even despite the fact that his mind often wanders to the past? Quentin spends his day roaming around town, helping a little girl find her family, getting arrested, and getting into a fight with a fellow student. This list of events by itself does not suggest that Quentin's time is in the here and now, but we should question why Quentin waits until the end of the day if he is going to commit suicide regardless. Why not do the deed earlier and just quickly end his pain? Although Quentin thinks about death often and shows many indications of his wish to die, he does not come to a resolute conclusion until the day's end, and, even then, Faulkner keeps Quentin's final decision somewhat ambiguous. Rather, Quentin decides to live one more day, during which he struggles with his past but simultaneously questions what this world has left to offer him in terms of a future.

As Quentin lives his final day wandering and wondering, within all the foreshadowing of death and excessive cerebrality, I find there to be several utopian moments in this section, moments that emphasize queer time as “[distilling] the eternal from the transitory,” a phrase that would coincide with what Muñoz calls “queer utopian memory” to highlight how the performativity of the past engenders a future in the present, even if this “future” is never fully realized (Baudelaire 684; Muñoz 35). Though one could argue that the majority of Quentin's

thoughts of the past are more distressing than pleasing, I feel that there are examples that are more hopeful and utopian. One, in particular, occurs near the section's end as Quentin heads back to the dormitory after departing from Shreve and Spoade, and Quentin thinks:

. . . then I was hearing my watch and I began to listen for the chimes and I touched Shreve's letter through my coat, the bitten shadows of the elms flowing upon my hand. And then as I turned into the quad the chimes did begin and I went on while the notes came up like ripples on a pool and passed me and went on, saying Quarter to what? All right. Quarter to what. (108)

I initially note this passage because of Quentin's touching his letter to Shreve—the metonymic displacement of desire that I believe highlights Quentin's homosexual desires. I also note this passage because of the obvious indication that Quentin is aware of or “in” time, though I also believe that what Faulkner suggests about Quentin's temporal experience in this passage is more complex. Quentin's watch cannot actually “tell” the time since it no longer has any hands, but it is still ticking. Though Quentin can hear the clock ticking, he is listening for the clock to chime, suggesting that the current time is near some quarter-hour interval. However, when the clock does chime, Quentin discerns the chimes as transitory like the waves of pool water. In this moment, Quentin transitions outside of time with these transient chimes, though the chimes ultimately dissipate while Quentin remains (for now). Still, in this moment Quentin is no longer bothered by or cares for (the) time. While it is unclear who “speaks” the last three phrases—Quentin or the chimes?—the end of the passage insinuates that the mechanics of time are no longer disturbing Quentin. The transition from “Quarter to what?” to “Quarter to what.”—from interrogative to declarative—proposes that the time in and of this moment is completely useless and irrelevant, for Quentin never resolves the “what” into a number but leaves the time as an unknown. The “All right” between the interrogative and the declarative signals Quentin's emotional transition, indicating his psychological satisfaction with not resolving this unknown.

Quentin can finally dismiss the mechanics of time, reaching a transcendental place where he can “distill the eternal from the transitory”—the transitory being those chimes, the mechanics of time, and the eternal being a life or world outside time where the anguish of time lost or losing time is inconsequential. For this reason, I return to Quentin touching the letter in his pocket. If we wish to understand the letter as a metonymic transposition from Shreve’s body to Shreve’s letter and Quentin’s continual touching the letter as symbolic of his desires, we could then deduce that in this moment Quentin is able to escape time via fantasy as he phantasmatically allows himself to defer to his desires and *touch* Shreve. Quentin returns the touches that he had only recently rejected while Shreve tried to console and care for him. In this regard, I consider this moment as symptomatic of Muñoz’s queer utopian memory: his letter to Shreve allows for Quentin to perform what he could not perform in the past and, in doing such, presents a utopian moment of hope that one day the metonymic barrier will be torn down, and body can finally touch body.

Nevertheless, this moment does not last long; Quentin’s death drive proves immitigable. Even though we do not actually know what Quentin’s letter to Shreve says, we can make a decent guess that the letter is probably a confessional, yet again the letter allowing Quentin to perform what he could not perform in the past. Furthermore, whether the metonymic barrier of desire and homosocial limits could ever crumble in the future, in the present the barrier remains buttressed, and Quentin, who can no longer endure *this* present, this repressed dystopian memory of the past, seeks death, denies longevity, denies the platitudinous “it gets better” mentality, denies his family’s legacy and inheritance—though, Quentin does wait until the last day of classes, which he skips, to kill himself as to “get the full value of his paid-in-advance tuition” (208). And still, his suicide essentially negates that education and the original propose of that

now-wasted money, which was to create a future for Quentin, for him to carry on his family's patronymy and patrimony as his education at a prestigious school should ensure him a wife and career. Even though such a future of heteronormativity and social, familial adherence would technically, in Sartre's terms, still constitute a metaphysically intact future, what perceivably worthwhile future could possibly await Quentin, or any of us, if he or we are to deny our identities for the sake of conformity and obedience, for the fear of opprobrium and alienation, and in the name of morals and values that are just as precarious and ephemeral as those individuals and institutions that seek to perpetuate them? Sorry Sartre, a barred future is *not* a future.

Caligula

I say with fair certainty that Caligula, or at least Camus's version of the infamous emperor, is a queer character. Perhaps my deepest grievance with most of the critical work on Caligula hitherto is the common reading and understanding of Caligula's pain and anguish as indicative of some absurdist and existentialist notion of *angoisse* innate to the human condition. In other words, most analyses have essentialized Caligula's struggles according to Camus's philosophies that absurdity is inherent to the world we have created and that such absurdity is, therefore, inescapable, restricting, and psychologically oppressive to the individual life and experience. Nevertheless, if we consider the Camusian storyworld created in *Caligula* as symbolic of *our* absurd world—which it would need to be if we are to judge Caligula according to the same absurdism, existentialism, and nihilism derived from our existences—then we would need to surmise that every character in this play must suffer to some existentially equivalent extent as Caligula since we have tautologically essentialized his struggle. Yet, Caligula's

thoughts, feelings, and experiences are wholly singular and seem foreign to the rest of the play's cast. The only character who comes close to comprehending Caligula is Scipion, which, I believe, is by virtue of the young Roman's own queerness and love for the emperor. Relatively speaking, no other character in this play experiences or expresses any sort of existential suffering akin to Caligula's; therefore, I ask, how plausible it is to scrutinize Caligula's anguish as essential to the human condition if he is the only one experiencing this angst? Thus, I propose that we look at Caligula as a queer character, as an abject other and whose experience fomented from his outsider position.

Although I am resolute in this polemic, I will first address why some might cast aspersions on this contention of including Caligula in the realm of the queer. Obvious is the fact that, historically, Caligula was a diabolical emperor whose reign was marked with horror, mass bloodshed, and tyrannical excess. For this reason, we also know that Caligula as emperor has the power to create and alter the laws—and, indeed, he actually becomes the Law in Camus's play—and these laws are essentially what establish certain lives and actions as sordid and abject, laws which try to create or perpetuate a certain normativity and standard of living as proper. Since Caligula *is* the system, since he has the power and is The Law, how could we possibly consider him a queer character, especially if to be queer is more a socio-political matter than just merely a sexual one? Moreover, why would those groups within the realm of the queer want to include a “bloodthirsty” tyrant in the same realm? Later in this section, I will address specifically Caligula's status as The Law, but for now I will mention that nothing about Caligula's emperorship depicts his desire to uphold the morality, conventions, and laws that have deemed many, himself included, as abject. In fact, Caligula uses his imperial authority to reverse the dialectical hierarchizations within conventional morality and heteronormativity to establish a

new order wherein he transfers agency back to the abject.

Beginning this discussion, I will broach my own question: Might we read *Caligula*, not just the play itself but its central character and his actions as an allegory or metaphor, or as allegorically or metaphorically hyperbolic? Numerous popular readings of *Caligula* consider this play a critical satire for political violence and misuse of power or an illustration of existential and absurdist philosophies and understandings of the limits of freedom and free will. But, can we momentarily defect from these types of readings, avoid looking at *Caligula* as merely an insane, bloodthirsty emperor, and try to understand who his character is and what he might represent outside the political and philosophical realms? In my reading, I hope to analyze and present *Caligula* not as an insane character bent on destruction, but as a misunderstood Other, as a character deemed an outsider from the very beginning even though politically he exists on the “inside.” Furthermore, though *Caligula*’s actions in this play are reprobable when taken literally, this play equally functions on multiple metatextual levels, stressing not just the power of law and politics but also the power of the performance and performativity. This play is about not only an emperor but a man *playing* or *performing the role* of an emperor as well as various other personalities simultaneously. *Caligula*’s role as emperor is merely a performance: just as the character of *Caligula* constitutes a fictive personality to the audience, *Caligula* as emperor functions as a fictive, performative character for *Caligula* as a human. For this reason, I view *Caligula*’s actions in this play as indicative of that performance and its objectives, that is, to restore equality, freedom, and happiness among the miserable populations by destroying the morals, values, and conventions that have shackled men and women and have created this present inequality, anguish, and grave loneliness.

In this section I will begin by exploring how we might initially consider *Caligula* a queer

character, specifically by noting and exploring his variegated sexuality, particularly his homosexuality or bisexuality, polyamory, and transgenderism, which includes performative transvestitism or drag and transsexual desires. I will also discuss how other characters view Caligula as an outsider and an aberration for his love of the arts, literature, and theatre as well as his suggested prediegetic incest with his sister, Drusilla. Additionally, I will also note several variations in the popular English translation of Caligula that will either add to or alter our understanding of Caligula as queer. Though both the original and the translation, I feel, present Caligula as a queer character, the translation goes a bit further to push the limits of Caligula's sexuality. From here, I will transition to how we are to understand this play's metaphoricity and metatextuality, examining the pervasive *mise en abyme* and play-within-a-play structuring that heightens this work's performativity. With Caligula's queerness and this play's performativity in mind, I will then discuss how Caligula experiences a uniquely queer temporality. I will discuss how at moments Caligula's time resonates with Muñoz's concept of queer utopian memory and how Caligula's performativity creates a future in the present. I will equally expound how Camus's notion of the absurd meets Halberstam's notion of queer time as centered on the here and now while Caligula embraces the world's absurdity and the reality of his ever-diminishing future. Finally, I will elaborate on Caligula's death drive and how his performance as tyrant is equally a performance that instigates and portends his death, culminating in the end of both the play's performance and Caligula's performance as a mortal.

Camus signals Caligula's queerness and otherness at the play's outset by one of his patricians who comments: "Je l'ai vu sortir du palais. Il avait un regard *étrange*"; ("When I saw him leaving the palace, I noticed a *queer* look in his eyes") (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 16; Gilbert 3; my italics). In the original, Camus writes that Caligula had an "étrange" look

when the Old Patrician saw him leaving the palace while Stuart Gilbert's translation uses "queer" as the descriptor. The common translation of "étrange" would be "strange," though Gilbert's translation of "queer" equally works insofar as queerness suggests strangeness to what is "usual" or "normal." Of course, the connotations of "queer" are equally redolent with hints of sexual deviance or aberration—such use of queer dates back to 1914, and by 1948, the year of Gilbert's translation, queer had popularly assumed the connotations of homosexuality and general sexual deviance or perversion ("queer, adj."). Nevertheless, we see the first major difference between the original and the translation—shall we read Caligula as merely a *strange* character or a *queer* character? Regardless, both terms suggest that his fellow noblemen consider Caligula an oddity, though we will eventually see that Caligula's strangeness seems to extend into his sexuality without Camus directly calling him queer. Moreover, this play begins by informing us that Caligula has been missing for several days following the sudden death of his sister-mistress, Drusilla. Caligula's running away is also indicative of his position as an outsider, for we enter this play with Caligula physically positioned as an outsider, outside the palace and his position as emperor. And soon, we witness Cherea claim that Caligula "aimait trop la littérature" (liked literature too much) and that an artistic emperor is not "*convenable*" (appropriate or befitting), or, as Gilbert translates, Caligula is an "anomaly" (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 21; Gilbert 6). Finally, when Caligula enters on stage for the first time, we receive a description of him in the stage directions as completely filthy and dejected, an image that is not *convenable* for the image of royalty. In the same stage directions, Camus also provides several hints insinuating that Caligula is possibly sexually impotent or has castrated himself. Camus details that when Caligula sits down, the emperor lets his arm hang limp between his knees, an image that obviously is both phallic and indicative of impotence or castration, both potentially being

additional reasons for Caligula's position as and sense of being an outsider—such reason will later be voiced by a patrician who believes Caligula's misuse of power to be symptomatic of his “impuissance” or impotence (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 23; 49).

While Caligula is certainly established as a political and imperial anomaly and outsider from the very beginning, Camus illustrates that Caligula's sexuality is very complex and far from heteronormative. We know that Caligula is artistic, potentially impotent, and considered effeminate by his patricians; however, Camus equally insinuates that Caligula is bisexual, or potentially homosexual, as well as polyamorous. First, we note that Caligula unofficially had two mistresses before his sister's death: Drusilla and Caesonia. Second, we also notice that Scipion seems to be another of Caligula's lovers—Scipion indeed declares his love for Caligula throughout the play in a manner unlike any other male character. We might also note that Caligula has Scipion's father executed extradiegetically between Acts One and Two: the father-child dyad traditionally obstructs the child's romances, and Caligula, by severing the head of this dyad, attempts to replace Scipion's father with himself, a measure that seems both cruel yet oddly romantic as well as pederastic. Third, while speaking with Caligula, Caesonia remarks, “S'il est vrai que tu aimais Drusilla, tu l'aimais en même temps que moi et que beaucoup d'autres”⁶¹ (38). If we are to understand Caligula's “love” for Drusilla as romantic rather than fraternal, then the love that he shares with Caesonia and the “others” is an equally romantic love, indicating Caligula's polyamory. As such, we recognize that Caligula's sexuality does not topically conform to heteronormativity; however, some of the more explicit examples that this play stages suggest that Caligula's sexual proclivities list more toward homosexuality.

Fortifying our understanding of Caligula as queer, and potentially as homosexual, we

⁶¹ “You may have loved Drusilla, but you loved many others—myself included—at the same time” (Gilbert 15)

should note, however, that Camus's play never explicitly displays any sexual intercourse on stage, especially male-female intercourse, though there is the suggestion of off-stage intercourse between Caligula and Mucius's wife. Suspicious off-stage sex notwithstanding, Camus does metaphorically represent intercourse with Caesonia and with Scipion in separate scenes; however, I am more interested in the differences that each scene purports when juxtaposed. First, Caligula and Caesonia's sex scene is metaphorically replaced with Caligula viciously beating on a drum and demanding that Caesonia obey him—this scene is transparently more indicative of rape than intercourse, especially as Caesonia cries for Caligula to stop, the climax coming when Caesonia cries that she is going insane (43). Though, intriguing is the fact that in the 1938 manuscript to this play, Camus does not include this drum beating, indicating that this scene was originally less metaphorically gravid with sexual energy and violence. In the 1938 manuscript, the scene merely consists of Caligula and Caesonia having a heated *tête-à-tête* that ends similarly to the 1944 publication with Caligula staring into a mirror, gazing at himself in a sadistic yet suggestively autoerotic manner (“manuscript original incomplete de *Caligula*”). Second, Caligula and Scipion's sex scene metaphorically occurs when Caligula asks that Scipion recite one of his poems to the emperor. With young, shy Scipion unable to perform, Caligula gives the young man some guidance, and eventually they both begin to recite the poem together until they finally finish, both clearly elated. After the recitation-*cum*-orgasm, the stage directions note that Caligula pulls to his chest a quivering Scipion, and the two wax philosophic about nature as Caligula strokes the young man's hair and Scipion continues to bury his face in Caligula's chest (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 78-80). The stark contrast between these two scenes proposes several important ideas. First, Caligula loves Scipion more than Caesonia but, essentially, Caligula is required to have a female lover. Second, the juxtaposition would also

indicate that Caligula is perhaps homosexual rather than bisexual, or he just prefers men to women without dismissing the possibility of hetero-relational intercourse. Third, the fact that Caligula “rapes” Caesonia and makes poetic love to Scipion would highlight a misogynist undertone, which later becomes an overtone as he murders Caesonia. Of course, the misogyny would appear less severe or pervasive in the 1938 manuscript without the metaphorical rape; however, the difference relative to the poetic sex with Scipion, which is present in the original manuscript, not only emphasizes Caligula’s homosexuality but also proposes a connection between his homosexuality and misogynistic feelings toward Caesonia as his requisite mistress. Adding this scene with Caesonia, Camus clearly endeavors to illuminate Caligula’s sexuality and desires as very complex and potentially imbued with repressed angst and frustration that violently surface across the play’s trajectory.

In his essay “Camus and a Society without Women,” Anthony Rizzuto also draws a connection between Caligula’s homosexuality and misogyny. Yet, the reason why Rizzuto draws this connection is rather fallacious and offensive to homosexual men who feel that their notion of time and futurity (their “destiny”) is neither assumed by reproductive futurism nor controlled by the Freudian “anatomy/biology is destiny” mentality that Rizzuto’s argument purports. Pulling from a quote in Camus’s *Carnets*, Rizzuto notes that Camus aligns the life and futurity assumed within reproduction as obviously opposed to death, and, since death is the only known, inevitable truth in Camusian absurdism, reproduction then comes to prevent humans (in Camus’s works, his male protagonists) from understanding the truth of death.⁶² Thus, Rizzuto understands Caligula’s homosexuality, his sexual denial of the hetero-relational byproducts of procreation, as misogynistic, evincing that this aforementioned view “is evident in the

⁶² This notion relates to what I have hitherto referred to as the phantasmatic future that assumes the heteronormative illusion of *the* future via the Child and genealogical futurism

misogynist attitudes of . . . Caligula, particularly in the earlier version of the play where his homosexuality is stressed. Women seem useless to [his] purpose which is to deny that procreation and biology, for men, is destiny” (6). Ignoring for the moment the fact that his essay mistakenly assumes the feminine energy only to allocate procreation and babies, what Rizzuto has essentially done in his study is to define a fairly common sexual preference of a homosexual male, who does not desire intercourse with women or procreation, as inherently misogynistic. In other words, Rizzuto tautologically deduces that “love of man” is inherently commensurate with “hatred of women” without trying to understand how Caligula’s misogyny might be a consequence of socially instigated, repressed sexual desires, especially since the masculine “love of man” is historically, conventionally, and religiously⁶³ debased beneath the masculine “love of woman.” This adjudgment, however, is certainly not to say that misogyny incited by sexual repression is ever justifiable, simply inevitable, or less egregious nor is it to claim that Caligula’s general treatment of Caesonia is not misogynistic. Consequently, I wish not to justify the many sexist facets within Camus’s canon that stem from his heterosexual male protagonists. Yet, since Caligula is an extremely singular character in the Camusian canon—a queer character—we must also analyze him as such and avoid blindly lumping him, as Rizzuto’s study does, into the same group with the obviously heterosexual misogynists of Camus’s other works. Rather, my point is to elucidate the violent potentiality of repressed sexual desires incited by a world that demands conformity and harshly censures and even punishes sexual aberration, which, ultimately, is paramount to our understanding of Caligula’s mentality and actions throughout this play.

These suppressed yet festering desires seem equally important when considering Caligula

⁶³ We must remember that Camus’s play is only superficially “historical” and seems a story more interested and imbued with the political and social problems of the contemporary era, meaning that an attempt at an historically accurate comprehension leads us to overlook many of the modern relevancies and complexities that this play proffers, namely those concerning religious and social morality and standards of behavior and living.

as a character with transgendered characteristics and desires. One of the first lines that we hear from Caligula is that he desires the moon (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 24-5). We can apprehend this desire in multiple ways. First, Caligula merely desires obtaining the impossible, something inhuman and supernatural that would consequently make him greater than human, freeing him from the pain and agony of life and mortality. Second, the moon is often personified as a woman or is identified with certain goddesses, such as Cynthia, Diana, and Phoebe (“moon, n.”). In this case, Caligula desires to have relations or intercourse with the moon goddesses, another feat that is obviously impossible. Caligula will later joke with Helicon, whose task is to obtain the moon for the emperor, about how he has already “had” the moon—this confession becomes ironic since Caligula’s alleged hetero-relational intercourse becomes associated with an impossible feat, suggesting that earthly coitus with a woman is just as impossible for Caligula as coitus with a celestial sphere (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 99). Third, since Aristotle’s time, the moon has been associated with insanity and irrationality (“moon, n.”). Logically, Caligula’s desire for the moon could indicate a desire for lunacy and absurdity, yet this desire, though seemingly paradoxical and ridiculous in our rational world, does not carry the same negative connotations for Caligula. Speaking with Caesonia in Act One, Caligula excitedly proclaims:

Je veux mêler le ciel à la mer, confondre laideur et beauté, faire jaillir le rire de la souffrance. . . . Je ferai à ce siècle le don de l’égalité. Et lorsque tout sera aplani, l’impossible enfin sur terre, la lune dans mes mains, alors, peut-être, moi-même je serai transformé et le monde avec moi, alors enfin les homes ne mourront pas et ils seront heureux. (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 41)

I want . . . I want to drown the sky in the sea, to infuse ugliness with beauty, to wring a laugh from pain. . . . I shall make this age of ours a kindly gift—the gift of equality. And when all is leveled out, when the impossible has come to earth and the moon is in my hands—then, perhaps, I shall be transfigured and the world renewed; then men will die no more and at last be happy. (Gilbert 16-7)

Caligula wishes to invert the standards and conventional, dialectical hierarchizations of good and bad, beauty and ugliness, justice and injustice, pleasure and pain, and, logically following Caligula's logic, sanity and insanity. Thus, if Caligula wishes to destroy the mores and inequalities of normativity, he must assume the side contrary to conventional logic, supporting those ideas and processes of thought considered senseless and dissentient to normative principles. I also believe that these transpositions include issues of gender and sexuality, and Caligula's yearning for the moon is equally a yearning to transform his body, to become a woman, for he is utterly dissatisfied with what the masculine body has provided him. Furthermore, later in the play, we see Caligula give two separate performances akin to what we might consider a drag show—Caligula dresses up in elaborate costumes of traditional female garments and makeup and dances on stage in front of his patricians. Though performative transvestitism or drag does not indicate transsexual desires, it does further demonstrate that Caligula turns to transgenderism as a means of liberating himself from the heteronormativity that had previously encased his body and existence. Finally, to further illuminate Caligula's dissatisfaction with his masculine body, he exclaims to Caesonia:

Oh! Caesonia, je savais qu'on pouvait être désespéré, mais j'ignorais ce que ce mot voulait dire. Je croyais comme tout le monde que c'était une maladie de l'âme. Mais non, c'est le corps qui souffre. Ma peau me fait mal, ma poitrine, mes membres. J'ai la tête creuse et le cœur soulevé. Et le plus affreux, c'est ce goût dans la bouche. Ni sang, ni mort, ni fièvre, mais tout cela à la fois. Il suffit que je remue la langue pour que tout redevienne noir et que les êtres me répugnent. *Qu'il est dur, qu'il est amer de devenir un homme !* (Caligula suivi de *Le Malentendu* 39-40; my italics)

Oh, Caesonia, I knew that men felt anguish, but I didn't know what that word anguish meant. Like everyone else I fancied it was a sickness of the mind—no more. But no, it's my body that's in pain. Pain everywhere, in my chest, in my legs and arms. Even my skin is raw, my head is buzzing, I feel like vomiting. But worst of all is this *queer* taste in my mouth. Not blood, or death, or fever, but a mixture of all three. I've only to stir my tongue and the world goes black and everyone looks . . . horrible. How hard, how cruel it is, *this process of becoming a man!* (Gilbert 15; my italics).

Officially, this scene comes not long after Caligula appears on stage for the first time, and, hence, he is still distraught and crestfallen. Most significant about this passage is that Caligula is aware that his body is suffering and changing or transforming, as Caligula mentions in the previous excerpt. There is an odd taste in his mouth, and Gilbert, yet again, uses “queer” to explain this taste. Caligula is distressed by and dissatisfied with his current corporeal reality, and he comments that this must be the process of becoming a man. The use of “man” is curious here for several reasons. First, “man” could merely represent the sexist usage of the masculine to mean “human” or “everyone.” In this case, Caligula would be suggesting that this bodily anguish is essential in the process of “being” or “becoming” a human or, rather, the human he wishes to be. However, if “man” here indeed signifies only the masculine body, then Camus presents yet another contradiction. Caligula seems pained and discontented with his masculine body, yet he figures these feelings to be essential to his “becoming” of a man. Of course, the use of *devenir* or *becoming* equally suggests that despite the sexual identifications of biology, no one *is* (*être*) ever one sex or the other, or one gender or another. Rather, sex, gender, and sexuality are processes of *becoming* but never fully reached, and later Caligula will begin to express his gender and sexuality as a performance. Still, we know that Caligula exudes transgendered qualities and, possibly, transsexual desires. So, what shall we make of this contradiction, that Caligula is *becoming* a man yet simultaneously wants to liberate himself from his masculine body? Perhaps this contradiction is intentional and not meant to be reconciled. Or perhaps, Caligula is attempting to redefine what “man” means or includes, as the eventual queering of his sexuality and gender and liberating himself from the hetero-masculine norms are what will, indeed, make him the “man” he wants to be.

Debatably, this process of *becoming* and the performativity of gender, sexuality, and identity are paramount to our understanding of not only this play but also Caligula and his actions—or, shall we now say, his performance. As I mentioned earlier, I believe that we should read this play and Caligula's actions not simply as situated within a larger performance for an audience but as a performance within a performance, and so on, as the pervasive *mise en abyme* opens up an existential chasm in this play that devours and nullifies any notion of realism. Furthermore, Caligula continually refers to how he is “playing a part,” and later when speaking with Cherea, he asks his patrician if it is possible for two men “se parler de tout leur cœur—comme s'ils étaient nus l'un devant l'autre, dépouillés de préjugés, des intérêts particuliers et des mensonges dont ils vivent”⁶⁴ (107). In this moment, Caligula wishes to drop his performance and remove his mask; by this point, he is becoming extremely exhausted and ill—the performance is finally taking its toll on his body. Yet again, we equally notice the homoerotic implications of this remark; Caligula wonders not only if two men can stop pretending and ever speak honestly to one another but also if two men can ever openly love each other in the way that Caligula desires rather than maintaining the façades of homosociality. Moreover, directly before this moment, Caligula places himself in front of a mirror and begins to speak to his reflection, admonishing his reflection for its performance, for the extent to which it has gone to play the tyrant, to bring logic, equality, and freedom to a miserably illogical, unequal, and unfree world (104-5). As last, we see that Caligula is wholly unsatisfied with his performance or even that the performance has commandeered his mind, soul, and body, and Caligula has no other choice but to continue this performance until the end, until he is dead and the curtain can finally drop. As

⁶⁴ “to talk to each other with complete frankness—if only once in their lives? Can they strip themselves naked, so to speak, and shed their prejudices, their private interests, the lies by which they live” (Gilbert 50)

such, this play is no longer about a murderous authoritarian—such a subject is merely a façade, a distraction, an insignificant shard of Caligula’s fragmented identity.

For these reasons, I feel that a downright censure of Caligula’s actions, or performance, is essentially to misread what Caligula as performer and artist is trying to do, and I also contend that Caligula’s performance includes the pervasive murders and violence and the plunging of Rome into chaos. Though my intentions are not to justify murder and violence in the “real world,” I do attempt to actuate a new apprehension of Caligula’s murderous performance as metaphorically hyperbolic and extreme. Even though Caligula as an historic figure and tyrant is “realistic,” Camus’s play is still fictive and mimetic. And though I could delve into the never-ending debate of art versus life, art versus reality, this play’s metatextuality and *mise en abyme* ultimately indicate the artificiality of the play’s narrative and that we should avoid the literal and superficial readings of Caligula according to conventional morality, for, ultimately, this play is an *absurd* play, precursory to the *Theatre de l’Absurde* of writers like Beckett and Genet, whose plays deny any reading attuned to realism, standard logic, or morality.

The degree to which *Caligula* is metatextual is quite extensive and complex and is largely in the form of the *mise en abyme*, which is found as both the performance-within-a-performance and the omnipresence of mirrors that virtually reflect the performance-within-a-performance and create the abyss that this play and its characters plunge into by the end. Inevitably, the metatextuality and *mise en abyme* signal that this play is about dramatic art and the power of performance rather than immediately being a play about politics and tyranny. First, we note that this play wields multiple other performances within its framework. Two of these performances include Caligula’s drag: the first shows Caligula dressed up as and playing the role of the goddess Venus, and the second depicts Caligula dancing on stage, dressed in a tutu and his hair

garland with flowers. A third performance occurs implicitly when Caligula and Scipion recite the young poet's verse, which I examined as equally metaphorical for intercourse. The fourth performance is more a performative competition: Caligula has several poets, including Scipion, write and perform verses in front of the emperor. Caligula's performance as Venus informs and performs Caligula's desires to become immortal as well as his transgenderism. Caligula's performance as a beflowered, avant-garde ballet dancer equally informs and performs his transgenderism. In addition, the mere absurdity of this second performance equally performs and signals the utter breakdown of the old order and the initiating of Caligula's newly inverted, absurd order. In both performances, Camus underlines the power of art and literature not only as performative and transformative but also as deifying, the artist or performer becoming the god of her or his fictive and performative world. And since Caligula as performer has created the world around him, both in Rome and on the stage, he has consequently made himself the god of *this* world, equally giving him the power to dictate and destroy this world. Thus, after Caligula finishes his dramatic dance, Caesonia enters and asks the audience whether they enjoyed the performance, informing them that anyone who did not enjoy Caligula's "émotion artistique" will be executed (124-5). If Caligula creates this world via his performance and becomes its god, then those who did not like the performance must equally dislike this new world around them and its god, and, therefore, must be punished (the syllogism and enthymeme become the tautological verifications of Caligula's absurd logic).

Nevertheless, the poetic recitations pose a different performative purpose. As already mentioned, the poetic performances serve as substitutes for sexual intercourse—the poetic emotion is evocatively comparable to the jouissance of coitus. I will return to the scene of Caligula and Scipion's metaphoric sex when I discuss Caligula's queer temporality; at the

moment, though I would like to focus on Caligula's poetry competition. The contest's objective is to write a poem about death that obviously suits Caligula's fancy. Having each poet read individually, Caligula then blasts his whistle once he becomes dissatisfied with a poem's content. One by one, as each of the seven poets recite their verses about death, Caligula cuts each of their poems short, ridiculing their incomprehension of death. Therefore, this competition becomes a performance wherein Caligula attempts to define death according to what death *is not*—that is, death is not to be understood according to the naïve pleonasms of the seven lachrymose poets. Nonetheless, when Scipion's turn to read comes, he presents a poem perfectly attuned to Caligula's absurd ideology and reads:

Chasse au bonheur qui fait les êtres purs,
Ciel où le soleil ruisselle,
Fêtes uniques et sauvages, mon délire sans espoir! (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 139)

Pursuit of happiness that purifies the heart,
Skies rippling with light,
O wild, sweet, festal joys, frenzy without hope! (Gilbert 66)

Clearly, Scipion's poem seems more concerned with life or metaphorically with ebullient rapture and sexual jouissance, rather than death. Yet, Scipion is the winner. As a result, this competition serves several significant purposes. First, since Scipion's lively poem wins, Caligula defines death and life according to another apparent contradiction and inversion: whereas life is restrictive and agonizing, death is liberating and purifying. Scipion's poem, then, is metatextually imbued with Caligula's absurd logic as well as indicative of Caligula's personal struggle with his own mortality. Second, Caligula uses poetry and art to define life and death rather than using the amorphous yet recognizable impressions of life and death as defining or restricting the poem's agency and relevance to reality. Therefore, Caligula places the mimetic and the Symbolic over the Real: art creates and defines life and death, not vice versa. And

Caligula, as artist and performer, can then dictate the meaning of life and death. As a whole, this contest metatextually informs Caligula's existence as an emperor who creates the law and dictates who lives and who dies. However, as I previously disclosed, eventually the performance begins to torment and enervate Caligula as well as it essentially overpowers and enslaves the emperor. For this reason, the performance is no longer what makes Caligula a god; the performance itself becomes the god, and Caligula must follow the wills and whims of the performance. Still, Caligula initially instigates the performance and claims that it was his choice to perform and pretend. So, if the performance is what drives this play and Caligula's actions, what is the goal or the intended outcome of the performance?

While I have already hinted at what Caligula's performance intends, there equally seems a larger purpose and aim. To understand the performance's determination, I turn our attention to a quote from the First Patrician:

Mais l'essentiel est que tu juges comme nous que les bases de notre société sont ébranlées. Pour nous, n'est-ce pas, vous autre, la question est avant tout morale. La famille tremble, le respect du travail se perd, la patrie tout entière est livrée au blasphème. La vertu nous appelle à son secours, allons-nous refuser de l'entendre ? (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 52-3)

Anyhow, the great thing is that you, too, feel that the whole fabric of society is threatened. You, men, agree with me, I take it, that our ruling motive is of a moral order. Family life is breaking down, men are losing their respect for honest work, a wave of immorality is sweeping the country. Who of us can be deaf to the appeal of our ancestral piety in its hour of danger? (Gilbert 22)

Although the First Patrician speaks these words as a denouncement of Caligula's actions, I shall look at them as Caligula's aim by virtue of his performance. And in this manner, I will begin to merge Caligula's queerness and performance with his desire to rid the world, or at least Rome, of the conventions and morals that have deemed him an outsider, an anomaly and aberration. As the First Patrician complains, Caligula has destroyed all the institutions and conventions upon

which the patricians believe the stability of *their* society rests. Obviously, to the male aristocracy of Rome, their understanding of society is going to include those institutions and values—family, marriage, ancestry, the labor of the lower classes—that have effectively provided them with their superior status and luxury. We should also note that this play only takes place within the palace’s walls, the perspectives we receive are only those of the patricians and nobility, and the deaths that we witness are only of those persons within the palace. Since we do not actually know what is happening outside those walls, we cannot condemn Caligula based on the perspectives of a few ignorant, frightened, and emasculated patricians. When Caligula speaks of the fact that men and women die and they are not happy, he is not referring to his patricians and to the upper classes of Rome that value their heteronormative realities as superlative, absolute, and unquestionable (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 27). And later, we see that Caligula actually supports and commends thieves, prostitutes, the disenfranchised and marginalized, those persons and subcultures who barely survive as they deny to exist according to the norms and laws that effectively deem them as abject. And though Caligula is centered on the “inside” of the palace walls, we see that he empathizes with the outside, and by inverting the conventional dialectics of history and piety, he wishes to consequently crush the inequalities and give men and women the freedom to live unrestrained by the manacles of normativity. Caligula’s performance intends this outcome, this future, and though he claims to live without hope, his performance inevitably imports a hope and a future, for the performance allows him to stage the future in the present.

As a result of Caligula’s performative aim, I move on to how Caligula displays what we can consider a queer understanding and experience of time. Caligula’s time as queer is, yet again, very complex, and my analysis does not intend or represent the sole manner of examining

his metaphysics. However, I will analyze Caligula's time according to several theories, all of which will produce unique conclusions. First, I will look at how Caligula's performances, particularly his drag and poetic performances, produce a future in the present. Second, I will look at how Caligula's time denies the heteronormative temporal modalities of longevity, family, procreation and reproductive futurism, and economics and politics. Finally, I will analyze how Caligula's performance is also imbued with his death drive, and how his performance not only stages a future in the present but also instigates and portends his death.

In his book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, José Muñoz explains that queer performances, those performances that transparently do not conform to heteronormativity, contain what he calls an "anticipatory illumination of a queer world, a sign of an actually existing queer reality, a kernel of political possibility within a stultifying heterosexual present" (49). This notion is in stark contrast to a heteronormative conception of futurity wherein the present is abandoned for the sake of a phantasmatic future (49). Esteeming the queer and queerness as utopian or utopia-inducing, Muñoz goes on to quote Theodor Adorno's theory that utopia exists within and becomes "the determined negation of that which merely is" (qtd. in Muñoz 64). I believe that Caligula's performances have this "anticipatory illumination" and enact a queer reality in the present, and, since Caligula is the emperor, he possesses the means of making the queer a reality. Furthermore, these performances are equally staged at the expense and emasculation of Caligula's patricians, who are indeed this play's villains. Caligula negates that which is present, the logic, morality, and convention that has created a horribly unequal and suffering world. Caligula negates "that which merely is" in order to engender utopia while he performs this utopia on stage and in poetry. As Caesonia claims, Caligula is creating a "nouvelle décoration" (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 68). This phrase is

particularly interesting because of the multiple possible meanings of “*décoration*.” First, *décoration* suggests decoration and design, obviously indicative of the arts and the theatre. Second, the word can also figuratively translate as design meaning order, social and political design, the structure and way of living. Camus’s diction consequently connects the order and design of the performance with the order and design of society; as such, Caligula creates this new *décoration*, this utopia through performance.

Beginning Act Three, Caligula’s first drag performance as Venus demonstrates not only Caligula’s enacting a queer utopia in the present through transgenderism but also the undermining of the old order by forcing the patricians to praise an emperor dressed as a woman and to give alms for the performance. First, by making the patricians address and praise him as a woman and goddess, Caligula begins to establish the potentiality of himself living a freely transgendered life, rearranges gender standards, and supplants the non-normative genders as honorable and worthy of praise. Second, the performance emasculates the patricians. Not only must they praise their transgendered emperor but also they must empty their pockets in praise of this performance and lower their economic statuses. And while we could easily call this indicative of Caligula’s vanity (which it is), we should note that Caligula has equally inverted Rome’s economic sphere, purging the kingdom of its age-old economic inequality. Whereas trade and production were previously the primary sources of economics and capital, now the nationalization of the brothel has become the fiscal epicenter, to which attendance is mandatory (68-9). Now, the coin has been flipped. Rome, the patricians included, must now support those persons and lives previously considered plebian, sordid, sinful, and abject. And though the extremity of Caligula’s actions are immediately reproachable according to conventional logic

and morality, we must remember the purpose of his various performances, to disrupt and destroy the old order, the dichotomized inequality of hegemony and to liberate the marginalized.

Caligula's recitation of poetry with Scipion presents another performative futurity and utopia in the present. As explained earlier, the recitation is metaphorical for intercourse. However, we should not merely read this scene as *what could be*, as an ersatz substitution for the real yet forbidden homosexual intercourse. Unlike Quentin, who can only perform his desires by metonymic displacement, Caligula and Scipion's performance *creates* their future and utopia in this moment rather than merely envisaging a possibility. First, we note the beautiful, natural imagery of Scipion's poem; his poem is about a "certain accord de la terre . . . de la terre et du pied"; ("a certain harmony . . . between one's feet and the earth") (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 79; Gilbert 35). As Scipion and Caligula recite back and forth, finishing the poem, we realize that this harmony is not simply between human and nature. Instead, it is a solidarity and euphony between two people, in this case, between two men. Second, with the recitation progressing, the harmony becomes corporeal as they bring their bodies together, and Caligula, as he holds Scipion against his chest, professes that he and Scipion "[aiment] les memes verities," that the "same eternal truths appeal to [them] both" (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 80; Gilbert 36). Though Caligula does not reveal what these "eternal truths" are, we can equally understand this phrase to denote the emperor's profession of eternal love for Scipion. Their eternal truth is love, and the only reason why Caligula could recite the verse with the young poet—a poem that he had allegedly not read—is his love for Scipion. The performance is not just sex but love, the truth of their love eternalized in this moment. In addition, as their bodies and souls merge, so do the present and future, but this future is not to be confused with the general notion of the future as phantasmatic, illusory, and constantly dematerializing through the present and to the past.

Nor is this future a mindless obsession with tomorrow that voids presence and the significance of the here and now. The future created in this moment is much more stable, for the performance equally harmonizes the present and future, destroying the conventionally dichotomized present-future dyad that forces the future to exist as an illusion.

The performative future and utopia of this poetic recitation notwithstanding, Caligula's time also seems akin to what Halberstam defines as queer time: an ever-diminishing future that stresses the potentiality of the here and now, a time that denies the heteronormative virtues of longevity, safety, and reproduction. There are several reasons why Caligula's future is ever-diminishing. First, having embraced the world's absurdity and following the logic of the absurd, Caligula as an artist, as Camus suggests in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, must live, perform, and create in a present *sans lendemain*, without tomorrow. Second, we later discover that Caligula is very ill; after his second drag performance, Caesonia informs the patricians that Caligula is suffering from stomach problems, having just vomited blood back stage (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 129). While Caligula's illness is obviously not HIV/AIDS, the disease clearly is taking a toll on his body, and resultantly Caligula feels his future to be ever-diminishing as his fatal malady slowly devours the time he has left. Speaking again with Helicon in Act Three about retrieving the moon for the emperor, Caligula, still in his Venus costume and painting his toenails, firmly avers, "Je veux seulement la lune, Hélicon. Je sais d'avance ce qui me tuera. Je n'ai pas encore épuisé tout ce qui peut me faire vivre. C'est pourquoi je veux la lune. Et tu ne réparâtras pas ici avant de me l'avoir procurée"⁶⁵ (100-1). What exactly does Caligula think will kill him? His illness? His enemies? Regardless, Caligula understands his time to be limited, his future continuously fading. At the same time, though Caligula remarks that there remain reasons for

⁶⁵ "All I want, Helicon, is—the moon. For the rest, I've always known what will kill me. I haven't yet exhausted all that is to keep me living. That's why I want the moon. And you must not return till you have secured her for me" (Gilbert 46-7).

him to keep living, to discover and extract new possibilities from the time at hand—his time, therefore, firmly fixed on the present. Third, as a queer character and vain emperor, Caligula seems wholly uninterested in reproduction or genealogical futurism. If Caligula is impotent, as the stage directions and phallic symbolism imply, then he would be unable to copulate. If Caligula is indeed homosexual, there remains the obvious possibility that he does not wish to perform hetero-relation intercourse and produce heirs, presumably with Caesonia, whom he seems to detest. Returning to the scene with Caligula and Scipion reciting poetry, during a long tirade about his loneliness, Caligula utters in an exhausted, lamenting tone:

Et près des femmes que je caresse, quand la nuit se referme sur nous et que je crois, éloigné de ma chair enfin contentée, saisir un peu de moi entre la vie et la mort, ma solitude entière s'emplit de l'aigre odeur du plaisir aux aisselles de la femme qui sombre encore à mes côtés. (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 82-3)

And when I am with the women I make mine and darkness falls on us and I think, now my body's had its fill, that I can feel myself my own at last, poised between death and life—ah, then my solitude is fouled by the stale smell of pleasure from the woman sprawling at my side. (Gilbert 37-8)

Clearly misogynistic in tone, Caligula's lament also communicates that inevitably he must be with a woman, a future that he does not regard with promise or happiness. Caligula voices his yearning for solitude, a feeling of peace, privacy, and independence that allows him to feel whole and composed, to reconnect and feel like himself once again. Yet, such prospect is never sustainable. Despite his drag performances wherein he can safely enact and satisfy his sexual and transgendered desires, off-stage and away from the performance, he will always be reminded of what he cannot be and the life he cannot live—the woman who eventually becomes his wife will always remind him of this defeat and impossibility. Hence, comparable to Quentin, the difference between the futures Caligula *must live* and the future he *wishes to live* opens up an existential chasm that renders his future futureless.

With this understanding of Caligula's vanishing future, we might also note that the emperor seems to have a determined death drive. In fact, most of Caligula's lines ooze with his death drive and denial of longevity. Although Caligula avows his desire for immortality and deification, these assertions are meant to instigate his eventual murder at the hands of the patricians who can no longer bear their loss of wealth and power. When Caligula tells Helicon that he has always known what will kill him, we can equally read this declaration as an announcement that he is aware of his inevitable assassination yet will not do anything to preempt this end. By the end of Act 3, we see that Caligula does not intend to stop the conspiratorial patricians from exacting their revenge against the emperor. While talking with Cherea, Caligula reveals a tablet that contains enough evidence of treason to sentence Cherea and the other conspirators to death. Informing Cherea that the tablet is the only piece of evidence against the conspirators, Caligula grabs a torch and melts the tablet. After destroying the evidence and upon dismissing Cherea, Caligula comments prophetically:

Les dieux eux-mêmes ne peuvent pas rendre l'innocence sans auparavant punir. Et ton empereur n'a besoin que d'une flamme pour t'absoudre et t'encourager. Continue, Cherea, poursuis jusqu'au bout le magnifique raisonnement que tu m'as tenu. Ton empereur attend son repos. C'est sa manière de vivre et d'être heureux. (*Caligula suivi de Le Malentendu* 113)

Even the gods cannot restore innocence without first punishing the culprit. But your emperor needs only a torch flame to absolve you and give you a new lease of hope. So carry on, Cherea; follow out the noble precepts we've been hearing, wherever they may take you. Meanwhile your emperor awaits his repose. It's his way of living and being happy. (Gilbert 54)

With all the evidence he needs to prevent the conspirators from assassinating him, Caligula chooses, instead, to vindicate them and allow them to execute their "magnifique raisonnement," or "noble precepts"—their assassination plot. More surprising, nonetheless, is that Caligula remarks that he awaits his "repose," essentially telling Cherea that he is anticipating his murder,

and this anticipation of death is “his way of living and being happy.” Not only does Caligula have a resolute desire to die but also this concept of living in constant anticipation of death is what ironically and paradoxically gives Caligula happiness. Unlike the numerous characters throughout this play who have groveled and begged for mercy in the face of their deaths, Caligula embraces his mortality as a reason to live and live fully, to take advantage of his remaining time. Concurrently, Caligula views death as his repose and liberation, the end of suffering and his futureless future. Yet, if Caligula’s life is mere suffering and all that awaits him is a future of sexual frustration and existential degradation, why does he not commit suicide instead of waiting to be murdered? For Caligula, to commit suicide when mean to assume and be consumed by an unstable notion of a phantasmatic future because the act itself would indicate that not only can he no longer endure the present but also he has considered the future’s potentialities and decided that death seems the better option. Yet, this type of phantasmatic future as dichotomized from the present does not exist according to Caligula’s logic, and so suicide becomes illogical. Determined to live in the present, Caligula instigates his own demise. As his death becomes more palpably eminent, in consequence, Caligula has no other option but to live in the present, to perform and enact a queer utopian future in the present despite the fact that this future is unachievable.

Certainly, Caligula’s performance is a series of absurd paradoxes and conundrums that denies any wholly rational and tenable deconstruction; thus, my foregoing analysis is far from all-inclusive. Primarily, the purpose of looking at Caligula as a queer character endeavors to incorporate his complex sexuality, his various performances, and his political power into a larger comprehension of how his character experiences time. Caligula’s performances depict his artistic and sexual desires as well as they allow him to enact a future is the present, to produce a

momentary queer utopia. Nevertheless, Caligula as a young, sexually expressive, and artist man is never reconciled with his political reality and the societal, conventional realities of Rome. And though he attempts to destroy the old order by negating and inverting all the norms, conventional logic, and morality that have created the unequal and abject world wherein he and many others suffer, Caligula equally realizes that the forces in Rome that uphold and embrace these mores will never allow his philosophies and desires to reach fruition. Accordingly, his death drive becomes a manner of mitigating this reality, of erasing the burden and anguish of a future he wishes not to live by instigating his own death and, within the time he has left, attempts to create a utopia wherein he can be the “man” and be with the man he desires.

CONCLUSION

Concluding this study, believe me, is no simply task, for there are undoubtedly additional examples and points of connection that I wish to make or that have gone unnoticed. However, fundamentally, this study is not meant to be exhaustive but has endeavored to broaden the Faulknerian-Camusian scope and broach new questions to keep this comparison (and both authors' individual canons) alive and thriving. Primarily, this study has sought, as I have repeatedly mentioned, to connect the canons of Faulkner and Camus in a manner previously unaccomplished within the sparsely dense, critical discourse on these two seminal writers. More specifically and as I hope to have shown, the similarities between Faulkner and Camus are not wholly one-sided, monocular, or strictly based on a Faulknerian influence on the Camusian canon. Rather, my research and this study have pursued a comparative analysis that limns how a comparable Faulknerian and Camusian train of thought, ideology, and philosophy produced works of similar literary grandeur and metaphysical technicalities. Moreover, time and temporal modalities are never easily discussed because, in order for one to discuss "time," one must willingly understand that temporality can never be objectively regarded without the inevitability of simplifying, subjectifying, or even essentializing the aforementioned modalities and, hence, losing all verisimilitudes of pragmatism or vicissitudes and nuances of reality. Furthermore, to discuss time according to fiction can equally render an argument less pragmatic and more dogmatic as the undertaken fiction is assumed to have a foundation in nonfictional reality. And such a scholastic predicament is beyond this essay's gambit. Yet, without explicitly essentializing this study, in the very least we might surmise that parts of this study and the examples considered possess some pragmatic authenticity, particularly historical authenticity

and, more importantly, will reveal new topics and methods of reading both Faulkner and Camus, independently and jointly.

Still, even if we cannot necessarily apply this study and its broached temporal modalities to pragmatism, we can certainly ascertain a myriad of authorial commonalities, which is this study's salient intention. Overall, this study has examined several key auctorial parallels, attempting to establish how Faulkner and Camus depict time as tragic via the motif of sterility (the ephemeralization of the perpetual). As I have explained and presented throughout this review, the Faulknerian-Camusian ubiquity of sterility, whether metaphysically inherent or unwilling forced onto the individual or collective identity and perception of time, conveys the conception that the future does not exist or that futurity is impossible beyond an ever-present past and ever-diminishing present. For Faulkner, time, or the sterility of time, can be succinctly condensed within an aforementioned quote from *Requiem for a Nun*: "The past is never dead. It isn't even past." This quote does suggest *a future* but not *futurity*, for the future is the past, a notion of time that seems retrograde, an apprehension of time totally contrary to the conventional understanding that the future is unpredictable and dichotomized from the past and from the present—i.e. what has become known as the phantasmatic future. Thus, for Faulkner, time becomes sterile since it is impotent, lifeless, and unproductive, producing nothing new, reproducing an always already *was* and an inexorable demise. Comparable to Faulkner, I feel that the Camusian understanding of time can equally be summed up by a signal quote from *Caligula*:

Loneliness! What do you know of it? Only the loneliness of poets and weaklings. You prate of loneliness, but you don't realize that one is never alone. Always we are attended by the same load of the future and the past. Those we have killed are always with us. But they are no great trouble. It's those we have loved, those who loved us and whom we did not love; regrets, desires, bitterness and sweetness, whores and gods, the celestial gang! Always, always with us! Alone! Ah, if only in this loneliness, this ghoulish-haunted

wilderness of mine, I could know, but for a moment, real solitude, real silence, the throbbing stillness of a tree! (Gilbert 37)

For Camus, the present becomes a garbage can for the past and future, but how are we to understand this “past” and “future”? Because Caligula perorates this harangue, we understand the future to be synonymous with death since the absurdity of life offers nothing other than death, a past that supplants the phantasmatic future, and an ever-diminishing present steered toward annihilation. In this sense, our future mortality and the mistakes and pains of the past always haunt our present, our time becoming nothing more than a trace of what *was* (the ephemera), and the only *will-be* is death.

And yet, whether intentional or at all desired, Faulkner and Camus present small glimpses of a future within their tragic tales. In *Les Justes*, the hope resides in revolution, to fight for an obtainable future for the present living—to produce a future that does not become a perpetuation of the past. In “La Femme Adultère,” the hope resides in the fact that we do not ultimately know what will come of Janine, and the possibility remains that she might find the fortitude to leave Marcel and establish her life anew and find peace with a world that has hitherto become foreign and menacing. In Faulkner, vestiges of futurity seem more difficult to come by, yet we notice particular characters, like Dilsey, who obviously assume a metaphysics wholly singular and uncommon is the Faulknerian storyworlds—a metaphysics of endurance and resilience. Nevertheless, even in a character as bleak as Quentin Compson, Faulkner subtextually alludes to some fleeting notion of hope or futurity. When reading Faulkner’s canon, we see in the transition from *The Sound and the Fury* to “The Evening Sun” (1931) that Faulkner literally resurrects Quentin, who begins the short story at the age of twenty-four yet commits suicide at the age of eighteen or nineteen in *The Sound and the Fury*. This resurrection narratologically gives Quentin more time, a future beyond his death as Faulkner gives him a

second chance at life. And even within *The Sound and the Fury*, if we read Quentin as a queer character, we can deduce some subtextual futurity as Quentin spends his final day pondering whether to commit suicide. Especially when we see Quentin's metonymic displacement of desire portrayed with the continual touching of Shreve's letter, these moments become metaphorical performatives wherein Quentin tries to enact his desires, thence producing a coup d'œil of futurity performed in the present. And this queer utopian future via performativity is emphatically displayed in *Caligula* as the emperor endeavors to perform his homosexual and transgendered desires through poetry, theatre, and drag, attempting to enact a future utopia—a negation of what merely is—within his limited, ever-diminishing present. Consequently, time and futurity are no longer notions of metaphysics, of a rigid yet incomprehensible distinction between past, present, and future. Instead, they become indicative of our ability to forget these boundaries and dichotomizations while imagining, performing, and creating a reality of temporal liminality (rather than finality) wherein the *nowhere* of utopia becomes a here, there, and everywhere.

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